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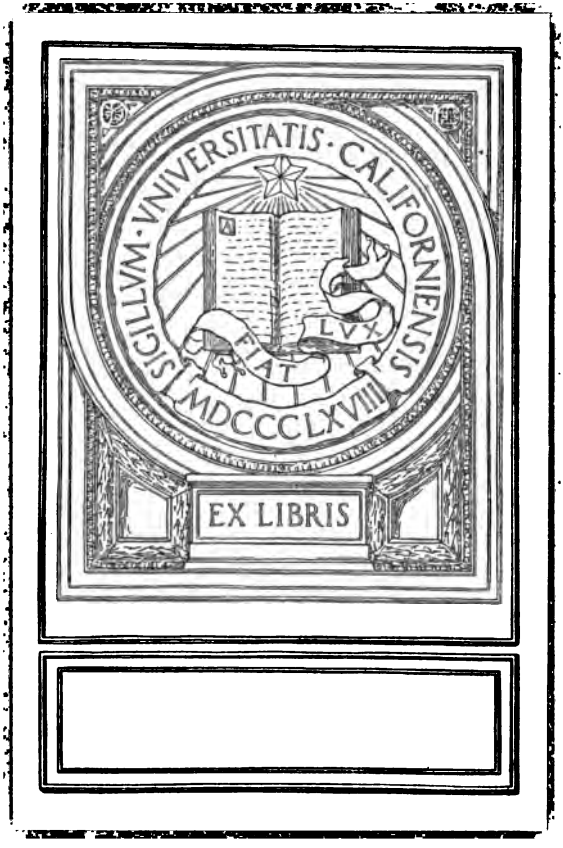
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REFLECTIONS ON THE WORLD WAR

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Photo *Rischgitz*

TH. VON BETHMANN HOLLWEG
German Imperial Chancellor from 1909-1917

REFLECTIONS ON THE WORLD WAR

BY

TH. VON BETHMANN HOLLWEG

TRANSLATED BY

GEORGE YOUNG

(Formerly Secretary of Legation)

PART I

THORNTON BUTTERWORTH, LTD.
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UNIV. OF
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FOREWORD

THE conditions of peace have been published while this work is in the press. The world has never yet seen so appalling an apparatus for the oppression of a vanquished nation. This peace is the crowning of the work that began with the creation of the Entente. The Paris findings have more than abundantly confirmed the views advanced in the following pages. I find nothing to alter there.

Th. v. B. H.

HOHENFINOW,
May, 1919.

470525

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INTRODUCTORY

I

WHEN Prince Bülow on leaving office in July, 1909, turned over to me the business of the Imperial Chancellery, he gave me, in various lengthy conversations, a review of the foreign relations of Germany. This review may be summed up broadly in the statement that our relations with Russia and France being entirely correct, the attitude of England alone gave any cause for anxiety; but that it would be possible with careful handling to establish confidential relations with England also.

My own impression was that the general ill-will that had been excited against us among the Great Powers of Europe, other than our allies, by King Edward's policy of encirclement was as bad as it ever had been. Iswolski, who was responsible for the foreign policy of Russia, lost no opportunity of giving the most violent expression to his irreconcilable

dislike of Count Aehrenthal and the latter's method of conducting Austro-Hungarian policy. Even the devotion and determination with which the Russian Ambassador, Count Osten-Sacken, the type of the sound diplomat of the old school, threw himself personally into the maintenance of the traditional friendship between Russia and Germany could deceive no one as to the fact that more influential forces in St. Petersburg were carrying their hostility to the Monarchy of the Danube over to its ally, Germany. Our attitude in the Bosnian crisis of 1908–09 had, as a matter of fact, been intended to offer the Russian Cabinet a way out of the cul-de-sac that it had got into, and had actually done so. But this attitude had been considered as an affront to Russian national feeling, and Russia had become more and more accustomed to regarding Germany as the principal obstacle to the realisation of its ambitions for exclusive control of the Balkans and of Constantinople.

Our relations with France were for the time being undisturbed. The Morocco economic convention concluded in February, 1909, seemed likely to avoid further friction, provided it were properly enforced. Moreover, the French Government of the day was obviously anxious to prevent noisy demonstrations of the *revanche* agitation. Monsieur Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador in Berlin, repeatedly assured me that more confidential relations between the two Governments were indispensable. He had a

lively recollection of the serious disturbances to which our relationship had been exposed in 1905. He knew the character of his fellow-countrymen too well not to recognise that the enforced resignation of Delcassé had then inflicted a grievous wound on Gallic pride, and that this wound had in no way been healed, even though the result of the Algeciras Conference had been eminently satisfactory for France. He was also bound in honour to recognise that neither 1870 nor Alsace-Lorraine were forgotten, and that longing for reparation of the injuries then suffered constituted an element in French policy dominating all more ephemeral events and calculated to cause the most momentous developments whenever the situation became in any way difficult.

In England, King Edward was at the zenith of his power. English politicians very generally lauded him as the great "peacemaker," and emphatically rejected all suggestions that the associations with France and Russia entered into by England aimed at a political encirclement of Germany—still less any military enterprise. Lord Haldane, in a speech made on the 5th of July, 1915, had expressly declared that any such opinion was without foundation and contrary to the fact. In this he was to some extent right and to some extent wrong. That King Edward, or to express it more correctly—the official British policy behind him, had planned any military enterprise against us, is in my opinion not the case. But

to deny that King Edward aspired to and attained our encirclement is mere playing with words. The fact of the matter was that the communications between the two Cabinets were confined essentially to the dispatch of such formal business as was required by the mutual relations of two States not at war with one another. Further, that Germany found itself opposed by a combine of England, Russia and France in all controversial questions of World policy. Finally, that this combine not only raised every obstacle to the realisation of German ambitions, but also laboured systematically and successfully to seduce Italy from the Triple Alliance. You may call that "encirclement," "balance of power," or what you will; but the object aimed at and eventually attained was no other than the welding of a serried and supreme combination of States for obstructing Germany, by diplomatic means at least, in the free development of its growing powers. This is the view taken of this policy not only among chauvinist critics but also in strictly pacifist circles, both in England, in Germany, and among neutral observers. Seeing that during this war the Entente has taken Belgium to its arms as its protégé, and enthusiastically welcomed it to its ranks as a fellow champion for right and justice, it can scarcely ignore the opinion of Belgian diplomats to the above effect. Their verdict exposes the various stages of encirclement in the light of the most damnatory evidence, and is even more convincing perhaps

than the numerous English witnesses who proclaimed at every opportunity the unfriendly and even hostile tendencies of the Entente Cordiale in respect of Germany.

We may learn much in this connection from the significance attached to the position of England in the new alignment of the Great Powers by the most respected English statesmen without distinction of party. Sir Edward Grey had declared as early as 1905, when the Liberal Party were about to take over the Government, that a Liberal Cabinet would maintain the foreign policy of the former Government. He added that he aspired to better relations with Russia, and that it was desirable not to oppose an improvement in the relations with Germany, but on the condition that such improvement would not prejudice English friendship with France. There you have it—an understanding with Germany, but only in so far as French friendship permits, and later Russian friendship becomes also a condition—that is the guiding principle of English policy from the end of the period of " splendid isolation " right up to the war. And this principle was a serious matter for Germany. England was well aware that the eyes of France were steadfastly fixed upon Alsace-Lorraine, and could hear the deep notes of the *revanche motif* sounding ever through the harmonies of Russo-French fraternisation. England knew well the conditions in respect of improvement of armaments and develop-

ment of strategic railways against Germany that France imposed on its ally, Russia, in return for almost every loan. In a word, England was at least in as good a position as ourselves to see right through the hostile tendencies of the Franco-Russian Alliance to the war that had already once loomed up behind them. No one could therefore be surprised at the anxiety with which German eyes followed every development of this English policy. Indeed, King Edward himself, the founder of the policy of encirclement, latterly gave more than one unmistakable indication as to how he wished to have his work regarded. The signal signs of favour that he accorded so energetic a worker for *revanche* as Monsieur Delcassé on the occasion of his fall in the spring of 1906, could not but dissipate any doubt as to the real spirit of the friendship uniting France and England.

Sir Edward Grey refrained, as far as he personally was concerned, from showing any actually unfriendly feeling against Germany. It is even questionable whether he himself recognised the full force of the aggressive tendencies of the Franco-Russian policy. Probably he considered it his task to water down these tendencies to the requirements of English policy. There is good reason to think indeed that his plans did not exclude the possibility of a *rapprochement* in certain respects with Germany, and that he considered such a *rapprochement* as reconcilable with the maintenance of a closer relationship with France

and Russia. His attitude seems to have been more complex than that of the French and Russian statesmen. Through his subtle brain ran various threads of political thought which possibly did not all lead to the more obvious objects of the Entente.

I do not intend to go into the question whether Germany could have given a different turn to these developments of world policy if it had responded in the first years of the century to the English attempts at a *rapprochement* and had modified accordingly its naval programme. In the year 1909, the situation which I am broadly attempting to describe here was based on the fact that England had firmly taken its stand on the side of France and Russia in pursuit of its traditional policy of opposing whatever Continental Power for the time being was the strongest; and that Germany held fast to its naval programme, had given a definite direction to its Eastern policy, and had, moreover, to guard against a French antagonism that had in no wise been mitigated by its policy in later years. And if Germany saw a formidable aggravation of all the aggressive tendencies of Franco-Russian policy in England's pronounced friendship with this Dual Alliance, England on its side had grown to see a menace in the strengthening of the German fleet and a violation of its ancient rights in our Eastern policy. Words had already passed on both sides. The atmosphere was chilly and clouded with distrust.

Under these conditions the position of Germany was all the more precarious, seeing that the Triple Alliance had lost much of its internal solidarity, even if externally it seemed still to hold good. This was not so, however, as between us and Austria-Hungary, where the closest understanding prevailed. We had got to know at Algeciras the limitations beyond which the diplomatic support of Austria-Hungary would not go. But Italy, after coming to an understanding with the Western Powers over Morocco and Tripoli through Visconti Venosta, was more and more clearly drawing closer to France; while its ambitions in the Balkans, even when they were in association with the Monarchy of the Danube and in antagonism to the Balkan nationalist movements, could not bring any real warmth into their relationship. A Foreign Minister like Prinetti could scarcely still be considered as a loyal exponent of the old Triple Alliance policy. Besides, preoccupations with its interests in the Mediterranean obliged Italy to look to England; to say nothing of the formidable prospect with which it was faced in the case of hostilities with England as its insular position put it quite at the mercy of the English fleet. The attitude of Italy at the Algeciras Conference and during the Bosnian crisis was sufficiently suggestive of the real state of the case. Its flirtations with the Entente had led to dangerous intimacies.

The external situation in the summer of 1909 may

then be impartially summed up as follows: England, France and Russia were associated in close coalition. Japan was affiliated through its English alliance. The grave controversies of earlier times between England and France or England and Russia had been got rid of by agreements from which each party had received material advantages. Italy, whose Mediterranean interests had brought differences between it and the Western Powers but had also brought it into dependence on them, had been steadily drawing closer to their group. The cement that bound the whole structure of the coalition together was the community of interest between the associated Powers created by the British policy of *do ut des* and by the conflict of each separate Power with Germany. The fundamental antagonism to Germany of the Franco-Russian Alliance had been aggravated in the case of France by the first Morocco crisis and in the case of Russia by the Bosnian crisis; in the latter case, be it observed, with gross ingratitude for our attitude during Russia's war with Japan. Japan, for its part, of course, resented the attitude we had taken at Shimonoseki. Finally the economic hostility of England to its German competitor had been given an acutely political character by our naval policy. And consequently Germany had, in my opinion, to endeavour to reduce the main danger that it could not entirely remove (that danger being the alliance of France with Russia), by getting English support of

this Dual Allliance restricted as far as possible. This made it necessary for us to try to come to an understanding with England.

The Emperor was entirely in agreement with this policy and even described it to me in more than one discussion as the only possible procedure and the one that he himself would pursue with every personal means in his power.

* * * * * *

The Emperor was very profoundly impressed by our beleaguered position. On the various occasions that he proclaimed the world power of Germany with characteristic eloquence and with a confidence inspired by the unanticipated aggrandisement of his country, he did so in the desire to encourage that country to new efforts and to raise it from its daily round by the stimulus of his enthusiastic temperament. He wanted to see his people strong and steadfast; but Germany's mission, a matter of religious conviction with him, was to be a mission of labour and of peace. That this labour and this peace should not perish through the perils that encompassed it about was his most constant care. Again and again has the Emperor told me that his journey to Tangiers in 1904, which he well knew must involve us in dangerous complications, had been undertaken against his own will and on the insistence of his political advisers; and that he had made the utmost use of his personal influence for a friendly settlement of the Morocco

crisis of 1905. His attitude during the Boer War and during the Russo-Japanese War was founded similarly on a desire for peace. And certainly a bellicose ruler would not have lacked opportunities for military adventures. At that time German critics were in the habit of asserting that too frequent protestations of our peaceful intentions were less conducive to peace than an inducement to the Entente to pursue a modification of the *status quo*. This consideration is unquestionably of weight in an imperialistic age which calculates mainly in terms of material power, and only incidentally contemplates the maintenance of peace. Such an age was the last decade before the war, and it is possible that such considerations explain more than one pronouncement of the Emperor in which German military power was strongly accentuated. Certainly expressions of this character did not tend to relax the general tension which was straining international relations. But the general unrest in the world was really rooted in that Balance of Power which divided Europe into two camps, anxiously watching each other and armed to the teeth. Besides, the Ambassadors of the Great Powers knew the Kaiser personally well enough to be able to see clearly that his intentions were really entirely peaceable. Nothing but a want of honesty which can only be explained by the state of mind created during the war could have presented to the world the odious caricature of a tyrant lusting for

war, world-power and carnage. The fate that has befallen the Emperor in this inexpressible misrepresentation of a personality profoundly penetrated by the ideal of peace is perhaps the greatest tragedy of history. Only those who, like myself, had been for years in confidential communication with the Emperor, and had experienced the passionate desire with which he sought a peaceable solution in that fatal summer of 1914, can realise how his suffering over the fall of Germany must have been embittered by these outrages against a sentiment so deeply felt and so founded on Christian conviction.

* * * * * *

The internal situation in Germany was very confused at the time of my entry into office. Prince Bülow's policy of governing through a parliamentary block had had an indubitable success, in that it had drawn progressive liberalism for a time at least from its unprofitable position in uncompromising opposition and had thereby broadened the basis of Government policy. But co-operation with the Progressive party had throughout been disliked by the Conservatives on practical as well as on personal grounds. And the Centrum, although it was in closer touch with the Right through countless common interests, found itself nevertheless combining with Social Democracy in opposition—a position imposed on it by the block elections but properly resented by it. Perhaps a better result would have been reached if the Govern-

ment had dealt earlier with the opposition of the Centrum as a purely transitory development. The dissolution of the Block had made the dislocation of parties worse than before it had arisen. The Right, relieved at being free from association with the Progressive party, was disposed to give more decisive expression than ever to extreme Conservative views, especially in the Prussian Landtag. The middle-class Left was bitterly disappointed at having failed in its hope of exercising more influence over policy, and was consequently being drawn again into the wake of the opposition. Social Democracy had been perceptibly weakened by the block elections but had only been hardened thereby in its intransigence. Only the Centrum had gained any advantage. Thanks to adroit leadership which held together the Conservative and Democratic forces included in its ranks, and thanks to prudent tactics that avoided every premature issue, it had regained a position that corresponded more closely than any other to that policy of the line of least resistance imposed by general conditions.

This general accentuation of party lines found plentiful encouragement in public opinion outside Parliament. It is almost impossible to-day to understand how the fight could have raged so bitterly over such a matter as the income tax with its quite moderate burdens, and how fundamental principles of German family morality could have been used as weapons in

such a fray. The resistance, especially of the Conservatives, was in this, as in other questions, utterly shortsighted, and did much to damage the party in the country, especially in so far as it relied on the support of the elements constituting the Landlords' Association. The reproach that the Conservatives in opposing the tax were trying to save their own pockets was too obvious not to be eagerly exploited by the agitation in the masses. And if the Centrum was made to pay less heavily for its refusal of the income tax it was probably because it adopted a less hostile attitude towards Prussian electoral reform. The rigid refusal of the Conservatives to renounce the class electoral system that had favoured their party so remarkably throughout the course of our national development, showed up their policy in its true colours of self-seeking class-interest. And this was aggravated by their refusal to accept an income tax that certainly hit landed property harder than other capital.

The party Press, of course, did its best towards broadening the split instead of towards bridging it gradually. The victory of reaction over reform—for the fate of the block policy and the fall of Prince Bülow were very generally so represented—was made by social democratic and democratic papers the subject of passionate outpourings over the general backwardness of our political conditions, which was assumed to be due to their dependence on an all

powerful squirearchy. Nor was it sufficiently considered how such exaggerations would miss their mark and create erroneous misconceptions abroad. As the years went on I was constantly receiving complaints from Germans who knew the real state of affairs at home and saw the reflection of these statements abroad. It would not be going too far to say that the campaign of hate and contempt directed against us by the enemy during the war has drawn its munitions from this source as much as from Pan-Germanism.

I, personally, had to suffer as much as anyone from the confusion of our internal political conditions. No party wished to expose itself to the reproach of promoting Government policy. This was enough in itself to counteract all attempt to form a solid parliamentary majority. In any case differences of political conviction would have made it impossible for me to bring my general policy into conformity with that of the parties who eventually carried through fiscal reform. And on the other hand, policy on the lines of Social Democracy and progress was even less a practical possibility. The only solution was to manufacture a majority as occasion arose; and as a matter of fact it proved to be possible to carry through all the Government's proposals in course of time and in acceptable form by this procedure, with the exception of the electoral reform of Prussia. And this even including such drastic legislation as the Constitution

of Alsace-Lorraine, the Insurance Act and the great Army Bills. A critic, if without party prejudice, will admit that Imperial legislation on the whole acquired by this procedure a character, possibly open to criticism on party principles, but in closer conformity with the manifold requirements of the moment than could have been provided by a legislature on a purely party basis.

In general my efforts to put Government before party, which were the subject of so much criticism and contumely, had an ultimate object that I considered as the principal goal of my internal policy and attainable by this method alone. There could be no question to anyone who studied the matter without prejudice that Social Democracy combined its bitter struggle against historic fact and its countless Utopias, all alike economically and politically impossible, with important objects which were not only inspired by idealism but also adapted to the political and economic development of its world. Its followers, which it counted in millions, were principally recruited from a working-class which could claim to have done great things in the way of productive activities, and which was kept under very strict discipline by the economic organisations of the trades unions and the political organisations of the party. Only an erroneous conception of the limitations of Government authority could cause anyone to suppose that such a power as this could be coerced by repressive measures.

The desire prevailing in various regions of the middle-class to keep Social Democracy permanently in the position of open hostility to the Realm and to the Government, even perhaps to drive it still further into such hostility, was not practical politics. It could not be reconciled with the responsibilities of a policy such as mine of a conservative and constructive character. I had already expressed my conviction to the contrary as Minister of the Interior when I, on the occasion of the opening ceremony of the German Labour Congress, declared that the adaptation of the Labour movement to the existing order of Society was the most important task of the times. And not long after I repeatedly and emphatically argued in the same sense when bringing forward the Labour Councils Act, a piece of legislation that unfortunately came to nothing. During the war I have firmly followed the same line, if possible with even stronger emphasis.

There were continuous and considerable obstacles to every attempt to induce gradually the Social Democratic party to take a positive as distinct from a negative part in governmental responsibility. The negative attitude of Social Democracy towards Money Grants and Army Bills, its terroristic extravagances in wage disputes, its professions of internationalist tendencies, and its constant and most damaging attacks upon the Monarchy, made every statesman suspect to the mass of the middle-class who did not

combat Social Democracy. The middle-classes had become partly convinced and partly accustomed to consider that the combating of Social Democracy at all times and on all occasions was the first requirement of sound statesmanship. The spirit of Bismarck was always being invoked and that, too, although the most uncompromising adherents of his anti-Social Democratic policy could not possibly have ignored the change in conditions since his time. And if the Social Democrats themselves might excuse their bitterness by pointing to the persecutions that they had endured under the Act against Socialism, and to many a hard word in subsequent years, yet it was they themselves who played into the hands of their opponents and made it difficult to protect them from demands against them dictated by the spirit of autocracy and forced as exceptional legislation.

The confused and fluid condition of parties was most unfavourable to the conduct of foreign affairs. The external position of Germany, as I have described it, was far too serious to allow it to indulge in the luxury of heated internal conflicts which would be welcomed by an unfriendly foreign public opinion as evidence of weakness. For although political life requires an emancipated criticism both of men and of matters, yet a reckless extravagance in this respect must eventually run the risk of giving the appearance of political immaturity. And it is impossible to give the interests of a country effective representation

abroad without an *esprit de corps* sufficient to bridle a contumelious criticism.

The German people had taken long in learning to give foreign problems that attention that was required by the entry of Germany into world policy. That is the impression that one gets from reading the annual debate of their representatives in the Reichstag on the Foreign Office vote. Many of the speeches on this occasion, speeches that were bound to make and did make bad blood abroad to no purpose, cannot but make us wonder whether the perils of our external situation were sufficiently realised in these discussions of our foreign policy; even though on the other hand such perils were frequently overestimated on the occasion of debates of Army Bills. The people as a whole showed no inclination for Chauvinistic impulses. The public read neither Nietzsche nor Bernhardi. And as the candidly materialist tendencies of the day found ample activity and satiety in a fabulous business prosperity, the public had no thought for conquest or for empire; while this fundamental current of opinion was expressed with sufficient accuracy in the policy of the various parties in spite of the nationalist campaign of some of their leaders. It must be admitted that Social Democracy was largely to blame if the nationalist point of view was often expressed in extreme forms conducive of violent conflicts and culminating in undesirable confrontations of national and anti-

national parties. For Social Democracy, whose internationalist point of view, whose opposition to armaments, and whose acceptance of the principle of arbitration constituted a programme that was in itself quite logical, pressed these international proclivities in season and out. The Pan-German propaganda also made its contribution to the conflict.

However untrue may be the view that obtained general acceptance abroad during the war that the German character finds its true expression in Pan-Germanism, it was none the less becoming evident in 1909 that the Pan-German movement had already begun to get a firm footing among the Conservatives and National Liberals. But this did not react upon the policy of the Government. Soon after my entry into office I had occasion to give a sharp repulse to an offensive of the Pan-German Association. I was to learn later, on the occasion of the Morocco crisis in 1911, and during the attempts to come to an understanding with England, to what extent parties who had a strong position in the Prussian administration, in the Army, in the Navy, and in big business, and who had been affected with Pan-German ideas, could and would embarrass the conduct of foreign policy. I do not mean that Conservatives and National Liberals carried on a campaign that contemplated war. But they could not deny themselves gestures that could be interpreted by ill-disposed persons as challenges. And they em-

barrassed my efforts to eliminate the friction surfaces in foreign affairs by reproaching me with weakness. Their favourite appeals to Bismarck were all the more effective in that his successors were powerless before the picture of the hero thus presented, even when they believed that his political methods were being completely misrepresented and that the difference in conditions deprived comparisons with his policy of all value.

The increasing approximation of the point of view of the Conservative and National Liberals in a Pan-German direction had its cause in movements of both internal and external policy. The ominous materialisation of the vital interests of public life which has been the characteristic of the last generation was to have its effect also in party politics. And just as this materialism was expressed in the case of the Conservatives by the dominating influence of the Landlords' Association and its associate interests, so it was in the case of the National Liberals and the captains of industry. And yet no party could do entirely without those ideal impulses that had once directed it exclusively. Consequently those political circles came almost involuntarily together whose patriotism was the noisiest; and it seemed inadvisable to the best party traditions to let them get a start in the profession of a nationalist point of view. Justifiable excitement at the challenge from abroad—as the policy of encirclement was

regarded by the public generally—was a powerful stimulus to opinion. And I cannot assert too emphatically that these efflorescences of Pan-Germanism were to no small extent the effect of the passionate explosions of Chauvinism in the countries of the Entente. But this Chauvinism, unlike that of Germany, had its source in the official policy of these Powers. And this element in the situation retains its intrinsic importance independently of the fact that Pan-German ideas had gone far to turn German heads and were used with such fatal effect by our enemies for the discrediting of us Germans. But if we for our part were guilty of an excessive national exuberance, yet the cry from the other camp that rang in the ears of a listening world—*Germania delenda*—came from the soberest commercial calculation. No doubt that made it all the more effective.

II

DIFFICULTIES WITH FRANCE

WHEN in the spring of 1911 the French Ambassador, Monsieur Jules Cambon, notified me of the proposed march against Fez, he could not conceal a certain embarrassment. This new deviation of French policy was indeed rather too obvious a contradiction of the desire for undisturbed relations between the two countries of which I had been so often assured. The Act of Algeciras had led to a signal success secured for France by the Entente Cordiale. French policy had ever since been endeavouring to free itself by a process of protracted and persistent penetration from the restrictions then imposed upon it. But now a strong step was to be taken towards a Protectorate, and international engagements were to be shelved. No one in Paris could have believed that we, in view of our political engagements of 1905 and of our material interests in Morocco, which were second only to those of France, could let pass in silence a forward move of so arbitrary a character which had been in no way provoked by us. But the

gentlemen of the Quai d'Orsay in no way responded to our demand that the Act of Algeciras which had been annulled by this French action should be replaced by a new understanding as to the respective rights of the two countries. Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter, who was at that time Secretary of State, was perhaps the ablest diplomat that Germany had had of late. But during the long comparative inactivity of his post in the Balkans he had been out of touch with the essential problems of our policy and had been summoned too late to authoritative co-operation at headquarters. There he came to the conclusion eventually that France could not even be brought to negotiate except by drastic means. That is how the much debated dispatch of the *Panther* to Agadir came about. It was no more than a notification that France would not be allowed to ignore our desire for a thorough discussion, forced upon us by the dilatory procedure of the Cabinet at Paris. It was a defensive rejoinder to an aggressive action on the part of France. A third factor in the situation that was as indicative of its cause as it was determinative of its subsequent course appeared in the notorious speech of Lloyd George, which revealed the menacing attitude of England towards Germany.*

* Lloyd George spoke on the 21st of July, 1911, at a Mansion House Banquet. After reviewing the benefits of peace and the historic *rôle* of England, he continued: "But if a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won

These factors must be borne in mind if you are not to misunderstand the significance of this crisis for the course conditions were taking throughout the world. The surprise of the "*Panther's* spring" came at first as a shock. But those Powers that allowed of arbitrary action on the part of France while they accused Germany of disturbing the peace of the world for protesting against it, must nevertheless have known well that if we had intended a military menace of France we should have chosen a very different method from the mooring of a small gunboat in the port of Agadir. German policy gave ample evidence by holding firmly to the course that it had laid down for itself, that it had been concerned from the very commencement with nothing more than an agreement by arbitration as to the differences that had arisen in France.

The masterful language of Lloyd George could not but cause a violent excitement in Germany. England therein laid claim in terms to that very world-empire that we were later to be hypocritically

by centuries of heroism and achievement, by allowing Britain to be treated where her interests were vitally affected as if she were of no account in the Cabinet of Nations, then I say emphatically that Peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure." The Ambassador, Count Wolff Metternich, was thereupon instructed to call the attention of Sir Edward Grey forcibly to this provocation on the part of Mr. Lloyd George, adding that we had never intended to dispose in any way as to the rights or interests of England; that such intention only existed in English imagination; but that threats and warnings would only encourage Germany to hold fast to its own good right.

accused of aspiring to. Any war was declared to be justified that Great Britain might wish to wage to secure recognition of its supremacy. What a curious contrast to the effusions that have become popular during the war as to the equal rights of nations and the unlimited love of peace of England herself. It was simply impossible to damp down the excitement in Germany. Distrust of England had of late bitten too deep owing to King Edward's policy. And the consequent bitterness was not confined to political circles that could be accused of Chauvinist sympathies or to so-called Militarists, but whole strata of society were affected where peace alone lay nearest to the heart of everyone. The Emperor, although subjected to much personal pressure, never for a moment allowed himself to be seduced from his firm line of action during these thunderous weeks. And I was able to pursue a policy of negotiation in complete agreement with the Foreign Office that finally led to the Treaty of the 4th of November, 1911.

The drastic criticism to which this Treaty was subjected in the Reichstag seems to me to have been highly impolitic. These violent attacks on a man who had helped to dispel a deadly danger aroused abroad an erroneous suspicion that the outbreak of the catastrophe would have been more welcome. If, on the other hand, the intention was to convey a warning to England, then it was a mistake not to see that such strong language in public sessions of

Parliament would have the opposite effect on English minds than that which was desired. We should have known better from our experiences in 1902, when the cold correctness observed during Chamberlain's abortive *rapprochement* satisfied public opinion in Germany but seriously offended it in England.*

In this way my policy of keeping the conflagration away from the accumulated explosives was perhaps unintentionally but quite unmistakably frustrated. We can see what an unsound estimate was being made of conditions from the remarkable opinions of the deputy Bassermann, who was looked upon as the authority in foreign affairs of his party. He considered that we should have made the gravity of the situation clear to the French when they refused to treat with us, not merely through the *Panther*, but by military action "that should be undertaken on our Western frontier seeing that all disputes with France leading to war were settled in Europe and not in Africa."

Ridicule at the alleged worthlessness of the Treaty of the 4th of November should moreover have been kept within bounds. This was prompted no doubt by the disappointed ambitions of industrial circles. Even before the crisis they had never wearied in their efforts to keep the Morocco question going before the Reichstag by means of their rapidly growing influence there, especially among the National

* Session of the Reichstag in January, 1902.

Liberals. And they had endeavoured to make use of national policy in the interest of particular industrial enterprises by a publicity campaign supported by considerable funds. No doubt there were justifiable complaints of French ill-treatment and trickery against the activities of German industry in Morocco in violation of the economic convention of 1909. But in these quarters no one seemed to take into account sufficiently, either during the course or after the conclusion of the crisis of 1911, that we were acting under force of circumstances owing to our general position in the then existing alignment of Powers. Nor did they ever reflect as they should have that a heavy liability had been laid on us that had to be liquidated.

One incident is worthy of mention as illustrative of the personal point of view of the Emperor. In the session of the Reichstag of the 9th of November the Crown Prince, who had come under Pan-German influence, had ostentatiously applauded certain Jingo expressions of individual deputies. In order to mitigate as far as possible the effect of this as a demonstration, the Emperor summoned me that same evening before the Reichstag rose and allowed me to make representations to the Crown Prince who was present. In these representations I struck the same note of dissent as that in my speech next day in the Reichstag against the deputy von Heydebrand. So decidedly and so drastically did the

Emperor approve of a policy directed to the smoothing away of world disputes.*

The final and historical outcome of this second

* On the 29th of October, Herr von Heydebrand at a Conservative Meeting in Breslau complained in very strong language of the decline of German prestige and of the grandiose "impudence" of the English Ministry. If even a Liberal Ministry that was looked on as pacific in England could shake its fist in our face and declare that it alone had to give orders to the world, that was very hard upon us who had 1870 behind us. The situation was so serious that he could not consider it his patriotic duty to overthrow the German Government before the eyes of the world. The Conservatives had, however, never left the Government in any doubt that the Conservative party would take its stand behind the Government to a man whenever the latter thought proper to take action for the honour and power of the German Empire. In the Session of the 9th of November, Herr von Heydebrand had struck an even more war-like note and had violently attacked the Government: "What secures us peace is not these compliances, these understandings and agreements, but our own good sword and the feeling that the French must rightly have, that we hope to see a Government ready not to let the sword rust when the right moment comes." In reply to my remarks on the speech of Lloyd George, Herr von Heydebrand said: "When we hear a speech that we must consider as a threat, as a challenge, as a humiliating challenge it is not so easy to pass over it as after dinner speechifying. Such incidents," he went on, "had like a flash in the dark shown the German people where was the foe. The German people now knows that when it seeks foreign expansion and a place in the sun such as is its right and its destiny, where it has to look to for permission to do so or not. We Germans are not accustomed to that and cannot allow it, and we shall know how to answer. When the time comes the German people will know what sort of an answer to give." I replied to these expressions on the following day as forcibly as the general situation required, and summed up my counsels of prudence in the following phrase: "that strength need not brandish the sword." Herr von Kiderlen then showed in a speech to the Budget Commission that was immediately given to the Press that we had in no way transacted with the honour of Germany in the matter of Mr. Lloyd George's speech.

Morocco crisis seems to me still to have been that France received a striking proof how confidently it could count on English support in all disputes with Germany even when British interests were only indirectly affected.

Certainly the provocative policy of France in Morocco was by no means universally approved by French politicians. "L'impatience de réalisation," as a witty Frenchman described this policy, was not to the taste of those who had been labouring for a gradual weighting of the balance against the Central Powers, and who were upset by the hasty procedure in Morocco. Moreover, a small group of politicians and financiers were by no means ill disposed towards the idea of the co-operation of German capital in certain specific enterprises. Industrial relations already existed and could be extended. But even the supporters of such plans took care to point out that the main issue between the two people was still open. A European settlement must, inevitably, come sooner or later, and if meantime one could make one's minor political and commercial arrangements as occasion arose, yet the scheme of a general understanding must be turned down as often as it came up. And the amenities that leading Frenchmen were accorded in Germany, especially on the part of the Emperor, were merely taken note of at best with courtesy but always without confidence. The main current was not to be diverted. It led

straight towards Chauvinism. The Cabinet that had concluded the Morocco agreement, and had thereby sacrificed inconsiderable colonial interests, was forced to resign. One was not at ease with these men who had negotiated with Germany.

The new Premier, with the help of the Nationalists, had made no concealment of his anti-German tendencies. Raymond Poincaré deliberately made a point of emphasising that he was from the Lorraine border. All his pronouncements breathed nationalism, and their effect in Alsace-Lorraine was plain enough. But of course M. Poincaré did not see any reason why he should not harvest the proceeds of his predecessors' labours in the Morocco Protectorate. Before all, however, he worked for the military strengthening of the Entente. His principal service, as French writers will no doubt recognise, was the establishment of allied assistance in the Grey-Cambon exchange of Notes; and the simultaneous naval agreements by which a large part of the British Navy was transferred to the North Sea fall into the same category. When M. Poincaré was promoted in January, 1913, to the Presidency of the Republic by quite a considerable majority, it was evident that Chauvinistic developments had made great progress. It was openly admitted that this Presidential election was determined by considerations of foreign politics. France was prepared for heavy sacrifices under the leadership of her new President. While still Premier,

M. Poincaré had, as was confidently asserted, returned from his journey to Russia pledged to introduce Three Years' Service. He had made up his mind to get the very utmost possible out of France in the way of military preparations. He found that his Socialist Premier was just as willing to accompany him on this road as was his closer associate, M. Barthou. It was the Cabinet of the latter who carried through the Three Years' Service Act at about the same time that the Reichstag voted the last great Army Bills. Without sufficiently considering the calamities that would fall even on the victors, he prepared the ground for war by helping to create the conjuncture that threatened peace.

I could from the first plainly recognise the echo of the new trend taken by the French Press on the accession to power of M. Poincaré whenever I had a conversation with M. Cambon. The Ambassador had up till then gone on ringing the changes on the theme that personal contact between the leading statesmen, such as he himself would gladly bring about, might do much towards leading the relations of both countries on to the lines of a mutual understanding such as he himself desired. The peaceable solution of the tedious Morocco negotiations was undoubtedly largely due to his being always patient and generally prepared to help. But from now on the Ambassador was visibly changed. I heard no more of procedure by personal contact. And when the

Ambassador visited me after one of his frequent trips to Paris, while he remained amiable as ever, he would become monosyllabic in spite of an epigrammatic and exquisite French wit whenever the conversation turned upon public opinion in France. Everything was avoided that could suggest that the Poincaré Ministry was guided by the same spirit of reconciliation that he had always been prepared to proclaim when the previous Cabinet was in office.

No one certainly could deceive themselves as to the alteration in the French character in the years preceding the War. It would be no exaggeration to describe this time as a very apparent renaissance of the nation after its collapse in 1870. Our last Military Attaché in Paris, Herr von Winterfeld, called our attention unceasingly to the obvious improvement of the Army that only reflected the increased efficiency of the whole people. Perhaps profounder preoccupation with the true nature of our western neighbour was not general enough among us, and we therefore could not do full justice to the real transformation that was taking place behind certain coarse and crude manifestations of the Boulevard spirit. That Chauvinistic passions should have sprung up from the reinforcement of the general vitality of a nation with such proud military traditions as the French was only a phenomenon common to all similar historical developments. The *débâcle* of 1870 could not be forgotten, and revenge

for military defeat was a feeling ever present to a people that was perhaps not directly seeking vengeance. It was certainly not the case that the loss of Alsace-Lorraine had destroyed French peace of mind. The idea of winning back the lost provinces no doubt smouldered continuously in the neighbouring Departments. But in the rest of France the public would not have gone on rejecting a real understanding with us on account of this question, provided those in power at Paris had pursued such a policy. But as the latter turned ever further and more firmly away from Germany, under the guidance of M. Poincaré, either out of patriotic conviction or from fear of losing power in the conflict of parties the public on their side had to follow them. For nowhere in the world probably is the power of an ambitious minority greater than in France. The French themselves have before the war admirably exposed this political peculiarity.

French Socialism, moreover, could not combat with success such nationalist activities. I have never forgotten an illustration in the popular *Figaro* dating from the first Morocco crisis in which a *piou-piou* confronts Socialism represented as an old woman agitator with the words "old woman, you are wasting your time, your day is over." This gives an idea of the weapons with which Chauvinism could work against Socialism in France, a country that has always prided itself on being in the fore-

front of social movement. The war-like ambition of the nation as a whole was the all-powerful factor. Could a turn of the tide be seen in the events of 1914? The elections to the Chamber of the 26th of April had, it is true, given a safe majority for the Three Years' Service, but the elections in May had been a complete success for the Socialists. As Jaurès wrote in *l'Humanité*, they were a declaration against "the unbridled calumnies of nationalism and reaction." And on the 16th of July the French Congress of Socialists voted a resolution that was to be referred to the Vienna International Socialists' Congress. This resolution demanded, after referring to pronouncements of the Alsace Social Democrats and of the German Social Democratic Congress in Vienna, "that Alsace-Lorraine should be given autonomy, in the conviction that thereby the Franco-German *rapprochement* indispensable to the peace of the world would be greatly facilitated." But the world went on its own way over the dead body of Jaurès. M. Poincaré was not concerned with *rapprochement* or autonomy. He was going to take Alsace-Lorraine. And Sukhomlinoff and Co. were to help him to do it.

III

OVERTURES TO ENGLAND

ENDEAVOURS to combat the mistrust that burdened our relationship with England by opening up negotiations on particular subjects date from the very beginning of my Chancellorship. The Emperor had the personal impression that prospects in England were not entirely unfavourable. Accordingly in the first days of August, 1909, I began conversations bearing on the Naval question with the Ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen. I found the Ambassador on the whole doubtful of success, and subsequently got the impression that, although his grandfather had been a German, he was not working with any deep fervour for a real *rapprochement* between the two countries. He was in any case much more chilly than his predecessor at the Court of Berlin, Sir Frank Lascelles, who advocated the idea of a better understanding with conviction. The long-drawn-out negotiations did not lead to the desired conclusion, in the first place because the Cabinet in

London did not seem themselves to have an interest in making them succeed, and in the second place because no formula could be found that would satisfy the Naval authorities on either side.

After the storm had blown over that had lowered heavy with war ever since the intervention of the English Government in the Morocco settlement, various quarters in England also set to work to reckon up the profits and losses of the policy hitherto followed. A small group of Liberal politicians entered into very active opposition against Sir Edward Grey's conduct of foreign affairs. They demanded a thorough reconsideration of the policy of the English Cabinet which, if continued, must increasingly imperil the peace of the world. A good illustration of this period will be found in an article in the *Nation*, an English weekly that was earnestly trying to counteract bellicose tendencies, and that was the centre of a circle of advocates of an understanding, who were not without insight and importance. "The closing of the Moroccan incident," said this paper in October, 1911, "has restored us our freedom of action." The relations between the two rivals, the article went on, must become cordial and confidential before it would become possible to discuss the restriction of the naval programme. And this would depend on the capacity of German and English diplomacy to work together in the interests of the future. "We have come to the point of seeing

Germany everywhere as Germany everywhere sees England, and that always in an attitude of hostility and distrust."

One went so far in these circles as to demand the retirement of Sir Edward Grey, a demand that was in any case quite hopeless, as the trio, Asquith, Grey and Haldane, were quite inseparable in the Cabinet. These three Liberal Imperialists, as they were called as late as 1916 by a personal follower of Lord Haldane, received steady support from Lloyd George in all decisive questions of foreign policy. The new First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, was also a firm supporter of theirs. And yet in the autumn of 1911 the undercurrent of opinion in the country seems to have convinced the Cabinet that a serious attempt at improving Anglo-German relations must be undertaken. The country had seen with alarm how close to the brink of the abyss of war it had been led, and the mass of the English people did not want to have anything to do with war any more than did the masses in France or in Germany. It was recognised on the other side of the Channel that the profound agitation in Germany had not been artificially excited, but was the result of an antagonism between the two countries that had been driven into an acute phase by Lloyd George's speech. And English eyes were not closed to those further consequences that might result from the agitation for an increase of Naval armaments that was being carried on by large

sections of the German public. But it was just these tensions between the public opinion of both countries that hampered realisation of that policy of understanding that they themselves had forced to the front. In Germany, on the one hand, all those who considered a reinforcement of our fleet as of vital importance for the security of the country loudly called for a new naval programme. In England, on the other, where Naval supremacy was considered as a matter of life or death, the imminent necessity of a disagreeable increase of taxation for the Navy was anticipated by the argument that if the German fleet was increased Anglo-German relations could not improve. English Ministers in their speeches took the line that England would stick at nothing in order to retain its former superiority in spite of any German increase of naval armament. And thus from the very beginning the desire for a *rapprochement* was intwined with cross threads from both sides that it was very difficult to disentangle.

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In the first days of December, 1911, the Emperor gave his assent to the policy of approaching English statesmen. The guiding principle was to be the re-establishment of a political understanding as a preliminary to all agreements on particular subjects. The general tension throughout the world originated indeed in the certainty of English support enjoyed by a Franco-Russian policy through whose ultimate

objects we were endangered. True, it was asserted on the English side that England had never given France any reason to doubt that it would not support an unprovoked attack on Germany. Such declarations, however, given in *camera caritatis*, were not decisive. Just after France had received in the Morocco crisis a testimony of the firm friendship of England that had been trumpeted to the whole world, a gradual damping down of the *revanche* idea that had been rekindled under the leadership of Poincaré was only to be hoped for if England provided some open and obvious proof of its determination to get upon a good footing with Germany. And only in relation with such proof did it seem to me possible to emancipate the naval question in Germany from the nervous strain to which it had been ultimately subjected by the existing alignment of Powers.

A conversation that the German Ambassador arranged with Sir Edward Grey just before Christmas suggested that the prospects were not unfavourable. No later than the end of January the well-known English financier, Sir Ernest Cassel, arrived in Berlin, carefully avoiding calling attention to his journey. He handed the Emperor a Memorandum on the joint authority of Grey, Churchill and Lloyd George, of which the purport was approximately as follows: Acceptance of English superiority at sea—no augmentation of the German naval programme—a reduction as far as possible of this programme—and, on the part

of England, no impediment to our colonial expansion—discussion and promotion of our colonial ambitions—proposals for mutual declarations that the two Powers would not take part in aggressive plans or combinations against one another.

Cassel returned with a reply that welcomed all steps towards an improvement in relations, and that declared our agreement with the proposals in question, subject to the reservation that in the naval question we took our stand upon the Naval Acts plus the Naval Bill already prepared. We suggested that an early visit of Sir Edward Grey would be desirable. Soon after we were informed through the same intermediary that Grey was willing to come to Berlin for personal negotiation in case the conclusion of an agreement seemed assured. We were further notified of the intention of the English Cabinet to send over the War Minister, Haldane, on a private mission for such negotiation. At a later stage of these unofficial preliminaries we let London know that concessions were possible in the matter of the Naval Bill, but only provided that we received simultaneous and satisfactory securities as to a friendly orientation of the English policy.

On the 8th of February, Lord Haldane arrived in Berlin. Our long and confidential conversation was conducted on the most friendly lines and with great candour. Haldane asserted emphatically that persons in authority in England were working not only for

an improvement but for a friendly reconstruction of relations. On the following day Haldane had an interview with the Emperor at which Admiral von Tirpitz was present. The understanding seemed already well under way. We made the concession that of the three ships in our Bill the first would not be required before 1913, the two others in 1916 and 1919, and this seemed to satisfy the English Minister. In a private conversation he described himself as particularly pleased at the impressions he had received, and full of hope for the success of a development in world history such as he considered the newly-opened negotiation.

On the German side an elaborate draft Treaty was drawn up centring on a definite declaration of neutrality between England and Germany. The formula was as follows: "Should one of the High Contracting Parties become involved in a war with one or more Powers, the other Contracting Party will at least observe a benevolent neutrality towards the Party involved in the war, and will use his utmost endeavours to localise the conflict."

Haldane on his side proposed the following formula:

"Neither Power will make or prepare to make any unprovoked attack upon the other or join in any combination or design against the other for purposes of aggression, or become party to any plan of naval or military enterprise alone or in combination with any other Power directed to such an end."

The rest of the draft Treaty was concerned with colonial questions in which Haldane made extensive offers in compensation for German concessions in the Bagdad Railway question. Besides an extension of the German colonial possessions in South-West Africa on the basis of an understanding as to the acquisition of Portuguese Angola, he contemplated also the handing over of Zanzibar and Pemba to Germany.

The English Minister admitted in the course of discussions of these respective formulæ that the obligation imposed by his proposal upon England was too weak, but he declared from the beginning that our formula went too far for him. He brought up some examples in order to illustrate this point of view. Should England attack Denmark in order to establish itself there, even if it were only to make a naval base or to exercise pressure over Denmark in any other way that would be inacceptable to Germany, Germany must keep its hands free; or should Germany fall upon France, England in such a case could not have its hands tied. And although I had no reason to doubt that Haldane had given the case of Denmark only as an academic example, yet he, in another connection on the same day, showed that he was apparently really afraid that we would break loose against France if we were sure of the neutrality of England. Certainly he did not again adopt this suspicious attitude towards me personally in

the further course of our conversation—a suspicion sufficiently contradicted by Germany's behaviour during the last generation. But he repeatedly asserted, and that too with great emphasis, that England's relations with France and Russia must under no conditions be prejudiced by closer connections with Germany. In all this I got the impression that Haldane was thoroughly well disposed. He tried to combine our formulæ, and accepted the idea of benevolent neutrality with the reservation that only wars were concerned in which the party to the agreement could not be considered the aggressor.

In respect of the naval question, which as I have said was dealt with in an interview between the Emperor, Admiral von Tirpitz and Lord Haldane with not unfavourable results, Haldane throughout admitted to me that we must bring in a Naval Bill and have a Third Squadron. The establishment of this Squadron would certainly compel England to maintain a larger North Sea Fleet, but that was a matter of indifference to England. The principal point was, in his opinion, that England should not be compelled to reply to German increases of Dreadnoughts by building double. He recognised that English wishes for a slowing down of the three Dreadnoughts provided for in the Bill would be met if the years 1913, 1916 and 1919 were fixed on, but he could not say how the English Cabinet might judge in the matter, and he therefore put the question

whether we could not give up all new building for the next few years. If we succeeded in concluding the "political agreement," relations would take on so friendly a form that an increase of building at a later date would not prejudice them.

I did not enter into discussion of these technical questions but said that for my part, in so far as the political question was concerned, the scope of the "political agreement" would be decisive.

On Sir Edward Grey meeting our Ambassador after Haldane's return, he expressed himself as highly satisfied. He had been, he said, "immensely impressed" by Haldane's report of his interview, and declared that he would further the good work with all his power! He hoped that we should succeed in dissipating the war cloud over the two peoples. Everything else would depend on a careful examination of our proposals. Public expressions of opinion in England were also friendly. Asquith made a sympathetic reference in the Commons, and Lord Crewe in the Lords, to the conversations that had been commenced, and the leaders of the Opposition, Bonar Law and Lord Lansdowne, gave cordial expression to the wish for a better understanding. The English Press abstained from unfriendly comment, but all the same emphasised in many cases in no uncertain terms that absolute loyalty to the friendship with France must be a condition precedent of any association elsewhere.

While Haldane had personally considered satisfactory our concessions in the Naval question, the English Admiralty came to a different conclusion after examining our Naval Bill that Haldane had brought with him. The Admiralty pushed into the background the question of the Dreadnoughts on which Haldane had laid the greatest stress, but raised the greatest objections to the rest of the Bill and especially to the increase of personnel. They maintained that if the Bill became law England would have to spend eighteen millions more on its fleet. Their deep distrust of the real or supposed plan of our Naval authorities was as unmistakable as the increasing anxiety in German naval circles lest our naval preparations be put a stop to.

I, personally, had made up my mind to work for the limit of concession in the question of the Naval Bill, provided that I could find a compensating counterweight in a political agreement. But this England would not give us. After tedious negotiations Sir Edward Grey at last conceded the following formula: "As the two Powers are mutually desirous of maintaining friendly and peaceable relations Britain declares that she will neither make nor join in any unprovoked attack upon Germany. Aggression upon Germany forms no part of any treaty or combination to which Britain is now a party nor will she become a party to any agreement that has such an attack for object."

This formula, which only secured us against unprovoked war-making on the part of England itself, but not against the participation of England in hostilities against Germany in the case of a Franco-Russian attack, could not effectively relieve the crisis in world conditions as then constituted. We therefore proposed an additional clause, that England would of course maintain benevolent neutrality "should a war be forced upon Germany," but Sir Edward Grey roundly refused such an addition, and that, too, as he explained to our Ambassador, from fear lest it should imperil existing friendships with other Powers. That was the deciding point.

It was characteristic of the English point of view as to peace and war that renunciation of a policy of unprovoked aggression should be considered an especial proof of friendship. And the reasons given for refusing our additional clause revealed the possibility that England looked on as the outcome of the Franco-Russian Alliance and at the same time indicated the position which was taken up in the Entente Cordiale. Sir Edward Grey's anxiety was only justifiable if he believed that he must take into his political reckoning the forcing of a war by the friends of England, and if he held himself bound even in such an event to give his support to the Allied Powers. Failing such assumptions there was no obvious reason why a neutrality agreement so strictly

defined as the one we had proposed should have caused ill feeling in France and Russia. The difference between English and German policy was in this brought into strong relief. Germany wanted to relieve, or better still to remove, the antagonism between the existing groups of Powers. Success in these efforts of ours would have been as much in our own interest as to the advantage of world peace. England on the other hand was looking in the first place to the maintenance of its power group intact, and as this group had been drawn up in battle order against Germany, as was clear to the whole world, this envolved the keeping of this antagonism alive. England accepted the perpetual menace of the world peace that was necessarily involved in this policy as part of the business. This was its renowned policy of the Balance of Power.

This is also the conclusion that will be come to by those who held the view, subsequently, as they believe, justified by the event, that the English statesmen were only making a show of negotiations in the Haldane mission so as to get rid of our Naval Bill. This conclusion has been encouraged of late by the English version of the matter made in defence of Haldane against English attacks. It amounts more or less to this, that it was Haldane's task to keep Germany in a good temper while England completed its preparations for war.*

* Harold Begbie, *The Vindication of Great Britain*, London, 1916.

I am the less concerned with arguing against an interpretation that runs quite counter to my personal impressions, in that it originates from a quarter notoriously in close touch with the former English Minister of War. For my part I still to-day incline to the view that we had to do with an honourable attempt to come to an understanding on the part of England. It failed because England was not willing to follow out this understanding into its logical consequences. An understanding with us meant that France and Russia must lose the certainty that they could continue to count upon the support of England in pursuing an anti-German policy. But that was just what England would not do and just what England could not do in view of its engagements, as is shown by the anxiety of Grey in respect to our additional clause as to neutrality. That is the real reason why the attempt at an understanding was wrecked.

The naval question was an important but not a deciding factor. True, public opinion in both countries had become greatly inflamed over the conflict between the English claim to supreme sea power and German conviction of the vital necessity of a strong battle fleet. But German naval policy had already for years been exercising to exhaustion its full effect over the general principles of English policy. The Entente Cordiale had already been concluded with France in 1904, and with Russia at

Reval in 1908. And since the military conferences between the French and English General Staff in 1906, France had felt sure of England's military co-operation.

Sir Edward Grey, as I have already said, had impressed on me the prior right of the friendship of the Dual Alliance in so emphatic and exceptional a manner since 1909 that I could have no doubts as to the determination to pursue this policy of association with the Dual Alliance, corresponding as it did with the political traditions of England, however ignorant I might be as to the exact content of the Entente agreements. But I could not have carried, or even effectively have advocated, an abandonment of the Naval Bill merely on the strength of the renunciation of an unprovoked policy of aggression conceded by the English Cabinet, and without a perceptible alteration of the general political situation. For there had been too much reason for the excitement at the attitude of England during the second Morocco crisis to allow of this. For this the conviction that a reinforcement of the battle fleet was absolutely indispensable to our national defence was too deeply rooted—a conviction, as I even at that time personally believed, erroneous but widespread and well supported.

It was perhaps a mistake that we underestimated the binding force of England's engagements with the Dual Alliance exhibited in the attitude of Sir Edward Grey, and consequently started negotiations

from too broad a base line. Perhaps nothing more than practical reconciliation of interests was possible, and we should have given up any immediate reconstruction of the existing alignment of Powers. While this would not have essentially improved our position for several years, yet it might have led in the course of some more or less protracted period to that relaxation of tension that our beleaguered position had caused me to work for in all haste and even over hastily. From this point of view the introduction of the Naval Bill was a mistake, as being a move that embarrassed the relaxation that we had in view. At the time when the failure of the negotiations for a political agreement had had to be accepted as almost certain by us, Sir Edward Grey had said to Count Metternich that he hoped that in any case, even if no agreement could be arrived at, the Haldane Mission and the free and open exchange of views that it had brought about might serve as a basis for a more candid and confidential relationship in future. This expectation was, as a matter of fact, not only ratified in principle but realised in practice. Combined work became much easier than before, and much more fruitful, especially during the course of the Balkan wars in 1912–13 and on the Ambassadors' Conference in London. The improvement of relations was even clearer when we began to try to settle concrete disputes, leaving on one side all abstract political discussions. Herr von Jagow, who had

succeeded to the conduct of Foreign Affairs, carried out this idea with great political acumen and with astute acceptance of the Fabian firmness with which English policy clung to the existing alignment of Powers. German and English interests had come into closest contact in Asiatic Turkey, where the Bagdad Railway enterprise had caused much disfavour and disquiet in England. Agreement as to these issues was of all the more importance in that it offered an opportunity of coming to an arbitral settlement with France and Russia as to mutual interests in those countries. Jagow's plan provided, therefore, for the whole complex of questions over which we came into contact in Asia Minor, not only with England, but with the whole Entente Cordiale. In these negotiations England showed itself a hard bargainer as always, but well disposed. It was, moreover, quite ready to meet us when we again took up at about this time the African colonial question that had already been raised by Lord Haldane. The general agreement with which England met our desires for consolidation and expansion of our African colonial possessions provides a striking refutation of the audacious assertion that the Entente have now dared to put forward, and that England has so enthusiastically pressed, that Germany was unworthy of holding Colonies. An agreement on Asia Minor questions was on the point of conclusion, and a Colonial agreement was already concluded, when

war broke out. The policy of agreements on particular issues had proved itself practicable.

During this time English policy, true to the principles that had been maintained during the Haldane mission, was busily engaged in making its friendship with the Dual Alliance weatherproof. In September, 1912, was concluded an Anglo-French Naval Convention under which the security of the Mediterranean was entrusted to France with its entire fleet, while England took over the protection of the North Coast of France. In November of that year, as became definitely known at the outbreak of war, Grey and Cambon exchanged those despatches that committed English policy thereafter irreparably and in writing.

Sir Edward Grey has been at great pains to explain in his speech of the 3rd of August, 1914, that this exchange of Notes with Cambon did not bind England to take part in the World War. That is true enough. But all the same this correspondence had a very powerful practical effect. France had been for almost a decade united with England in the closest political friendship, and had received the most striking proofs of that friendship in the two Morocco crises. Since 1906 the two general staffs had in periodic discussions been deciding on behalf of their Governments how the two armies could most effectively co-operate together in the case of a war with Germany. And if France could now bring it about, almost directly after the two Morocco crises and the menace

of war created by Lloyd George's threatening speech, that the regular consultation of the two staffs should be authorised in writing and on a broad political basis, then France could properly draw no other conclusion than that it could count upon English support in the case of a war with Germany even if England nominally reserved its liberty of action as to participation in the war. The circumstances under which this correspondence between Grey and Cambon took place, like the verbal arrangements of 1906, gave its purport a force such as is lacking to many a treaty of alliance in which definite obligations have been formulated. It would not be just to Sir Edward Grey to question the assurances to which he gave such emphatic expression in the speech of the 3rd of August, that he had worked for peace during the Balkan war and had sought peaceable solutions even as late as July, 1914. But he is perhaps labouring under an unconscious self-deception in laying claim to credit for this as well as for his general policy. His policy of alliances that was so strongly marked in the military agreements, and that contemplated even the gravest possibilities, was calculated more than anything else to stiffen the backbone of the Dual Alliance. And every schoolboy in Europe knew that the objects of Franco-Russian policy were not friendly to Germany. The blindest hater of Germany could not deny that the uneradicated French demand for the re-acquisition of Alsace-Lorraine, and Russian

ambitions in the Balkans and Constantinople, could only be realised through war.

In this way the Grey theory had the actual effect, which was aggravated by the activity of his colleagues, not of promoting peace but of precipitating war. Whatever view may be taken of the ultimate objects pursued by England, whether the prevailing intention was to render Germany compliant by diplomatic action to all British demands supported by recourse to the pressure of the Allied military preponderance or whether a war with Germany was looked upon as inevitable, the actual result in encouraging the aggressive tendencies inherent in the Dual Alliance cannot now be disputed.

English policy was to take an even stronger line in the spring of 1914. I learnt about what then took place through the Russian documents that have since been published.*

These documents established the fact that Russia had used the presence of Sir Edward Grey in Paris in April, 1914, on the occasion of the visit of the King and Queen of England, in order to bring about the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian Naval Convention through the intermediary of the French Government. The object of this was, as Count Benckendorff wrote to M. Sassonow, "to substitute something tangible for the altogether too abstract and pacific fundamental idea of the Entente." It was also shown that

* *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 18th—29th December, 1918.

Grey readily accepted the Russian proposal that was warmly pressed on him by the French Government, and applied for and obtained the consent of the English Cabinet. Further, that by arrangement the military and naval authorities took over the negotiations while the Government stood on one side in order if necessary to be able to deny any political engagements.

As soon as we heard of this we struck a warning note in a German paper, and instructed Prince Lichnowsky to indicate to Sir Edward Grey that we had reason to suspect disquieting developments. Grey, much annoyed that the truth as to this carefully kept secret had leaked out, made an involved and embarrassed statement in reply to a question in his own Parliament on the 11th of June, in which he denied that the complete liberty of decision either of the Government or of Parliament had in any way been anticipated. But his real intention in this statement, as Count Benckendorff telegraphed to M. Sassonow the same day, was to disguise both the arrangements with France as also the negotiations that had been opened with Russia.

The Naval Convention was as far as we know never concluded. The readiness of the English Cabinet, however, to conclude it was ample security for Russia as to the purpose and the point of view of England. Had not Russia just been pursuing under the eyes of England a stormy policy in respect to the

Balkan wars which was nothing less than provocative of European complications? Had not M. Sassonow only a few weeks before exploited the Liman Sanders question for an openly bellicose policy? Even if Sir Edward Grey disapproved of the arbitrary activities developed in these matters by M. Sassonow, he was doing nothing less than inciting similar tendencies in Russia in giving glad assent to a Naval Agreement with Russia under pressure from France on the top of such proceedings. A Naval Agreement, moreover, which was to guarantee to Russia the English shipping required for the military invasion of Pomerania. As in the case of the exchange of Notes with Cambon, the proof of the pudding was in the eating, but this pudding was a bit too thick. We can read the complete contentment of Russia and France, who recognised that Grey could not conclude a formal alliance in view of English public opinion, in the report of Count Benckendorff to M. Sassonow as to the success of the English visit to Paris: "I am very doubtful whether a stronger guarantee for joint military operations in case of war could have been found than that provided by the spirit of this Entente as now revealed and as reinforced by existing military precautions."

Sir Edward Grey had surrounded all military arrangements with France and Russia with the most absolute and anxious secrecy. He has himself told us that his own Cabinet was only informed of the

exchange of Notes with Cambon a considerable time afterwards. And that there should have been any secrecy at all allows us to conclude that English public opinion, that was of old unfavourable to any far-reaching political engagement, had an instinctive sense of the danger of war involved in all military agreements and did not at that time want war.

The more difficult it is to get at the real opinion of a country and especially of a foreign country, the more careful one must be to avoid exaggeration. Clamorous Chauvinists and consolatory pacifists exist everywhere, and between them stands the great average mass that works in silence, that wants peace and will only agree to war when the safety and honour of its country are attacked. It would be as perverse to attribute bellicose tendencies to the English people from the crude and often staggeringly candid declarations of English Jingoes as it would be to accept as moral truth the Entente clamour as to the bloodthirstiness and barbarism of German Huns. But although the general mass kept silence when the Chauvinists trumpeted their hate and havoc about the world, or when pacifists preached a peaceable settlement, yet even they looked upon a Germany that kept on growing as an unwanted and troublesome intruder on the sanctity of British supremacy over the commerce and oceans of the world. This feeling, stronger in some quarters, weaker in others, gave the keynote of sentiment everywhere, in spite of the much

good business that many did with their cousins across the North Sea. This *communis opinio* was the base in the English people itself for a policy of ever closer friendship and association with France and Russia, and this association became so intimate that English statesmen could finally no longer refuse the fatal solicitations of their friends.

IV

TRIPOLI—BALKAN WARS—RUSSIA

WHILE we were still deep in negotiations with France as to Morocco, Italy laid hands on Tripoli. The Triple Alliance seemed to be on its last legs. The Entente camp made no concealment of its malicious satisfaction at Italy having taken a line which must, it was hoped, lead it away from its allies. There was nothing in the Triple Alliance itself to stand in the way of this Italian undertaking, for Italy was not bound to get our consent for action in Africa. But we had to see that Italy, in pursuing its African ambitions, did not come into conflict with the general interests of the alliance as comprised in the Treaty. And more than once during the Tripoli campaign occasions arose when it was difficult to keep Italy and Austria-Hungary in agreement. As the war in the Cyrenaica proceeded, Italy wanted to attack Turkey in Europe in order to force a decision. This caused a crisis in the question of the Balkan *status quo* as to which special conventions had for some time existed between Italy and Austria-Hungary.

More than once we had to intervene in order to prevent the differences between our allies from developing into a serious danger.

In this the French were involuntarily of considerable assistance to us. I cannot say whether the Entente had especially instigated Italy to its Tripoli enterprise. But now that the Moroccan dispute had been peaceably settled France had no longer any particular interest in preventing a solution of the Tripoli affair. In any case, the two Western Powers had long recognised the reversion claimed by the Italians in this remnant of the Ottoman Empire, and a realisation of this reversion was undoubtedly a part of their general plan for the partition of the North African littoral. But the French were to prove that there is not always honour among thieves, for after carrying off their booty they tried to cut down the Italians' share. They made difficulties for the Italians at sea and about Tunis, and both in private and public worked against their establishment in Tripoli. They wanted to prevent the Italians from having too easy a success, and they feared Italian ambitions in Tunis.

Thus it came about that Italy was again brought to recognise the uses of the Triple Alliance. On the Secretary of State, von Kiderlen, visiting Rome in January, 1913, he was received with the warmest cordiality. The King and the principal Ministers outdid each other in demonstrations of friendship, while military circles became expansive as to the

enhanced military value of Italy for its allies, now that Tunis or even Egypt might be threatened from Tripoli and the Cyrenaica. The meeting of the Emperor with King Victor Emmanuel in March was no less reassuring, and the political conversations of the two Monarchs even more than usually harmonious. The King made no attempt to disguise his dissatisfaction at the French encroachments. So, when San Giuliano came to Berlin in November everything essential for the renewal of the Triple Alliance was easily arranged, and our success in effecting this renewal, soon after the end of the Tripoli campaign and two years before the official expiration of the Treaty, in spite of considerable opposition especially in Northern Italy, was due largely to Italy's experiences in its African enterprise. It looked as though the Triple Alliance might have a new lease of life. But it could not be restored to its original vigour, for Rome had involved itself in too many responsibilities. It had laid down all manner of lines not only with the Western Powers, but with Russia, too. We certainly had no detailed information how far Italy had gone with Russia at Racconigi—only the latest Bolshevist revelations have shown us that Italy in October, 1909, had got Russian consent to its Tripolitan schemes by concessions as to the Straits question—but even without such specific knowledge we felt that too much reliance was not to be placed on Italy.

The Italian attack on Tripoli was a grave embar-

rassment of our relations with Turkey. The Entente Press lost no time and spared no trouble in impressing on the Turks the falsity of our friendship that could not even impose restraint on our allies. But the confidence enjoyed by the Secretary of State, von Kiderlen, and the Ambassador in Constantinople, von Marschall, was strong enough to stand the strain. Moreover, dangers were now threatening Turkey that quite dwarfed this fight for an African outpost. The Porte had no alternative but to come to terms with Italy as speedily as possible in order to defend itself against enemies nearer home and far more formidable.

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In February, 1912, the Balkan States began their preparations for a joint attack on Turkey. We got early indications as to what was going on, and in the course of the summer we had definite information that a Balkan alliance was concluded. We could also assume that Russia was backing it up. On M. Sassonow passing through Berlin the day that Montenegro declared war, Herr von Kiderlen remarked to him that patronising unruly Balkan peoples seemed a dangerous game, to which the Russian statesman could only reply that Russia had expressly prohibited the Balkan States from all aggressive action. Whatever the view may have been that the Prince of the Black Mountain took of this prohibition, Sassonow's reply at least conveys an admission that

Russia had its finger in the pie. And at our meeting in Baltisch Port early in July, 1912, when M. Sassonow had pretended to discuss the whole political situation with me quite openly, he had not said a word about the plans of the Balkan States which he was then well aware of. Indeed, up to the very last Russia expressly denied to us the existence of any Balkan alliance under its leadership. The subsequent publications of the Bolsheviks now show how deeply Russia was involved in the intrigues of this storm centre of Europe.

One of these publications is the Serbo-Bulgar Alliance of March, 1912. A secret annexe to this treaty defines the part to be played by Russia in case of a war with Turkey as follows: "Should an agreement be reached as to military action Russia shall be informed, and should it raise no objection the allies shall thereupon proceed with the proposed military operations." And, further, "Should an agreement not be reached the matter will be submitted to the consideration of Russia; the decision of Russia will be binding on both contracting parties." We see the hand of Russia throughout. The ultimate decision of all disputes was reserved to the Tsar. He was to have the last word in partitions of territory after the war: "It is understood that both parties bind themselves to accept as a final frontier such line as H.M. the Tsar may think good to lay down."

Similarly the other conventions between the Balkan

States of this summer of 1912 were concluded under Russian auspices. And in their case also St. Petersburg was to have a hand in the division of the spoils. This all represented a long stride on the part of Russia towards the domination of the Balkans and the liquidation of Turkey in Europe, a stride taken in full consciousness that this Balkan War might lead to a European War. In November Sassonow wrote to Count Benckendorff in London that he considered the situation as most serious, and that possibly war was the best solution.

The prevalent tendencies in Russia further appeared in incidents on our frontier that, if not of the first importance, were not without significance. In the summer of 1912 Russia arranged extensive test mobilisations in Poland without notifying us beforehand, and in defiance of convention. These caused so much alarm that we were compelled to make urgent representations. While, in September, the wife of the Grand Duke Nicholas, then attending the French manœuvres, as representing the Tsar, made a demonstration about the " lost provinces " that was loudly exploited by the French Press.

It is, of course, obvious that Russia kept its French ally fully informed of its policy and participation in the Balkan imbroglio. But it also took into confidence its associate, England. M. Sassonow had communicated the general contents of the Serbo-Bulgar Treaty to England immediately on its con-

clusion, and on the outbreak of war had followed this up with the full particulars and the programme for the partition of the spoils with the request that England should support the wishes of the Balkan peoples and of Russia. How this request was regarded in England we know not. But if subsequently Sir Edward Grey undoubtedly laboured with us to guard the general peace of Europe against disturbance from the Balkan War, he was at least privy to the programme promoted by Russia that had turned the Balkans upside down and that might at any moment, against his will, set a match to the European magazine.

In this whole Balkan crisis France took its stand most decidedly beside its Russian ally. M. Poincaré gave M. Iswolski an express assurance in November that if Russia went to war France would follow, because France knew well that Germany in this affair stood behind Austria. The same statement was made to the Italian Ambassador. The view taken by Russia itself of France's position appears in Count Benckendorff's despatch to M. Sassonow of 25th February, 1913, in which the former thus describes the situation and reviews the crisis : " France had promised its military support without reserve, and was the only Power that would have seen war come without regret."

It does not come within the scope of this work to review the various vicissitudes of the two Balkan

Wars. The sudden collapse of Turkey and the subsequent collision between the victors caused the prime movers of the Balkan Alliance to lose control. The ambitious peoples of the Balkans were not such tame tools in the hands of the mighty as to let them at a word cut down their national aims or curb their racial hate. Even the Tsar's Ukaz was not strong enough to keep Serbs and Bulgars in check. The patronage of the Balkan Alliance had become for the time a thankless task, and the difficulty of directing the swift course of events was such that it seemed desirable to set going a sort of European concert. This general feeling of helplessness lasted, indeed, for some little time. The box of Pandora had been opened, but no one knew how to shut it again. The attempt that was at first made to work on the basis of the *status quo* came from an under-estimate of the pressure for political independence developed by the Balkan peoples and was soon abandoned. A proposal directed principally against Austria for a declaration of disinterestedness was shelved without serious trouble. Austria and Italy, putting aside their own rivalries, made a joint stand successfully against the partition of Albania proposed by the Balkan allies and supported by Russia. Although the independence of Albania thus brought about, and previously provided for in a former agreement between the two Adriatic Powers, was regarded from the first as a purely fictitious solution of the question. If at

times diplomatic methods seemed likely to fail, yet eventually the general desire prevailed not to allow matters at that moment to develop into a great European War.

During the Balkan Wars the Kaiser adopted an attitude of the utmost caution, and confined himself to caring for the preservation of peace. I distinctly remember a long conversation in November in which the Kaiser declared positively that he would not allow of a march against Paris and Moscow on account of Durazzo and Albania. He could not answer to the German people for such a responsibility as that. We had at times to bring strong pressure to bear on Vienna to prevent matters being forced to the sword's point. This was not facilitated by the provocative proceedings of Russia that had begun military preparations as early as the spring of 1912. But we allowed of no doubt that in any case we took our stand firmly beside our ally, " in the case of an unexpected attack by a third party while acting in its own interest, by which its existence should be threatened." When in December I defined our position with these words in a speech in the Reichstag, while it caused lively displeasure in St. Petersburg, yet I produced the result I wanted. They felt themselves not ready to fight, and accordingly fell into line. Matters had broken out in the Balkans prematurely and they had to put on the brake a bit.

This also led to the results of this premature action

not being wholly such as those behind it had hoped for. The founders of the Balkan Alliance had intended that it should effect, in the first place, the partition of European Turkey, and in the second, the protection of the Balkans against Austria. Russia, and one may perhaps say the Entente also, had intended that it should form a solid Balkan front against the Central Powers. This object was not as completely attained as had been intended. Nevertheless, the scale had been heavily weighted against the Central Powers. Turkey had been vastly weakened and, besides Constantinople, only retained a scanty scrap of Europe. For the time the Entente had no object in depriving Turkey of this last remnant. Turkey could be left the post of "Gate-Keeper of the Straits." Moreover, in spite of its fearful losses, it had succeeded in gaining and keeping a modest success at the end of the war which had greatly restored its self-confidence. The hopes of Bulgaria had been dashed, and its belief in Russia cruelly disappointed. The army had furled its flags and awaited better days in deep detestation of its triumphant Serb rival and of the Roumanian that had put the finishing touch to its defeat. Serbia had made a great stride forward and could only realise its remaining ambitions by war with Austria-Hungary. It was already proceeding to prepare for this next step with enormously enhanced self-reliance. Roumania had got all and more than it had any use for

on the side of Bulgaria and was in open conflict with Austria-Hungary. German diplomacy could do no more than deter it from bodily going over to the Entente. King Carol, though already weakened by age, constituted a personal guarantee for the maintenance of the old relationship. The aggrandisement acquired by Greece had greatly advantaged the dynasty at Athens, and had thereby augmented the factor friendly to Germany in a country that was, however, exposed at all times to the pressure of the Entente and little capable of effective resistance.

Such was the general aspect of affairs after the conclusion of the Second Balkan War. There could be no doubt that the peace of Bukharest was merely a short breathing space. The Ambassadors' Conference in London that had served as the organ of the Powers for localisation of the conflagration had fulfilled its function for the moment. Outbreaks elsewhere had been beaten out successfully, but Europe all the same was left with the anxious feeling that the Balkan battles were merely the prelude and the preface of a more tragic drama.

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Published evidence shows that our efforts throughout the Balkan crisis to mediate between the vital interests of Austria and the ambitions of Russia were guided by the general policy followed by me from the first in our relations with our Austrian ally and our Russian neighbour. I certainly was convinced that,

in spite of the obvious rifts in the structure of the Austrian State, in spite of all declared or disguised sympathies of Slav constituents of the Monarchy with Russian Pan-Slavism, nevertheless the Bismarckian Dual Alliance must under all conditions be maintained. Apart from all the movements that are expressed to-day in the entry of German Austria into the German Realm any idea of breaking up the alliance would have been madness, seeing that the Entente group was now so firmly consolidated that there could be no prospect of any sudden change there. Only in the case of England could there be any question as to whether the European Powers could be regrouped on entirely new lines. I have already attempted to show how and why an attempt in this direction failed. Russia was, however, bound to a France that could not turn its eyes from that void in the Vosges by an alliance that had become ingrained in the popular instincts, that was almost annually reinforced by financial bonds, and that had guided Russian activities for whole decades, both in diplomatic proceedings and in military preparations. True, M. Sassonow had, in the spring of 1914, thrown out the observation to a German financier whom he wished to interest in Russia that we should let Austria drop, in which case he would drop France. But even if German politicians had seen in this remark, characteristic of M. Sassonow, a real overture and not merely a ruse of *ancien régime* diplomacy, even so

they would still have been forced to the conclusion that the Russian statesman was grossly deceived as to the extent of his own powers and the strength of his French fetters. The task of Germany in respect of Russia was necessarily reduced to managing Austria-Hungary in so far as good faith and good friendship would allow—as in fact we repeatedly and successfully did during the Balkan crisis—and to trying to make our position in St. Petersburg such that our offers of mediation would not be repudiated there should such become necessary.

Of this character was the well-known Potsdam agreement of the 4th of November, 1910. As in our later negotiations with England, we were to arrange practical specific settlements of concrete matters in combination with a general political understanding. France and England, however, took good care that the agreement, though completed, should come to nothing. The comments of the French and English Press over the Potsdam meeting showed clearly the disagreeable surprise in official circles of both countries at any action that could affect their relationship to their ally and friend by altering the latter's relationship to Germany. Russia thereupon grew chilly again. All record in writing of the verbal agreement at Potsdam was avoided with the excuse that the Tsar's word was enough. The same thing repeated itself later when English intervention protracted and prejudiced our settlement with France over Morocco.

All the same the personal relations between the two Governments had improved, though this was of course not decisive in matters of high policy. The Tsar had always accorded me his personal confidence, and had repeatedly assured me that he would at all times and in all places use his influence for peace. And up to the winter of 1913–14 I had friendly personal relations with M. Sassonow. But the Tsar was weak and wavering, and M. Sassonow both irritable and suspicious. I believed I could place full confidence in the character of the Premier, Count Kokowzow, and I am still convinced that if he had remained longer in power Russian policy would have taken a different course in 1914.

How excitable M. Sassonow could be, appeared in the autumn of 1913. Turkey's proposal for the establishment of a German military mission at Constantinople had been discussed verbally by the Emperor, in my presence, with the King of England, and with the Tsar without either of these monarchs making any objection. On the contrary, the proposal was accepted as merely a renewal of the earlier military mission of Golz Pascha and was taken as a matter of course. But Sassonow, whom I met in November in Berlin on his return from Paris, assumed from my not having discussed this affair with him that I had been trying to go behind his back. Of course there was no question of this. I took it for granted he was cognisant, and had no occasion to

make this matter, which was already reaching its conclusion in technical military negotiations, the subject of political discussion. But M. Sassonow had the alarm sounded in the Press and forced the question into the plane of high politics. After personal discussion with Count Kokowzow, who soon after passed through Berlin, and after meeting his wish that the head of the Mission should not be given active military command, I succeeded in so clearing up the matter that the Tsar expressly conveyed to Count Pourtalès his satisfaction at its solution. This suspicion ill became Sassonow in view of his own reticence at Baltisch Port as to the Balkan developments he himself had set on foot.

Although he knew through Count Kokowzow that I was prepared to meet the principal Russian objection, Sassonow still maintained and insisted to the Tsar that Germany's policy as to the military mission had been tricky and designed to sap the solidarity of the Triple Agreement. He knew perfectly well that Russia could not oppose the military mission in principle. But he set everything in motion against the German Command in Constantinople. Early in 1914 Sassonow seems to have submitted proposals to the Tsar which contemplated securing the support of France and England, and preparing for the possibility of serious military action. There seems already to have been question of an occupation of Turkish ports. Undoubtedly the possibility of a European War was

considered. It is not known what decision the Tsar came to, and it is possible that Sassonow's plan was allowed to drop when, about this time, the Liman-Sanders question was adjusted. But how little this alleged distrust of German trickery, and how much more imperialist expansion was the main motive of Russian policy, is evident from the further course of events. The Russian Government were not satisfied with the solution of the military mission question expressly accepted by the Tsar, and continued to press preparations for the occupation of the Straits with cynical acceptance of the fact that such an operation could only form part of a general conflict.

According to the protocol of a conference on the 21st of February, 1914, published by the Bolsheviks, Sassonow declared roundly that it was not to be assumed that action against the Straits could be taken to the exclusion of a European war. The General Staff, moreover, agreed that a fight for Constantinople was only possible in case of a European war. None the less, plans for the " seizure of the Straits in the near future "—so runs the protocol—were discussed in detail. The Tsar approved of the comprehensive preparations agreed on. In the report of the discussions on the 21st of February that Sassonow submitted to the Tsar, with a memorandum on the 5th of March in which the measures for seizure of the Straits were discussed, mention is made of the " expected crisis " which " possibly very soon " would give an oppor-

tunity for settling the Straits question. Russia had the historical *rôle* of making itself mistress of the Straits. Everything indicated that it was for Russia to settle this question during a European war. The English and French fleets would in such an event hold in check the fleets of the Triple Alliance. But no further support for operations against the Straits could be counted on. The success of such operations would, of course, be closely bound up with international conditions. "To prepare the ground for this was the immediate task of the calculated concentration of the Foreign Ministry of this question."

All commentary is superfluous. Nothing has, so far, come to light as to further political preparations. But the excitement in St. Petersburg at an article which appeared in March, 1914, in the *Kölnische Zeitung*, and sounded a note of alarm at Russian military preparations, is only explicable as the result of a bad conscience. That France granted a large loan on condition of the construction of strategic railways on the German frontier is known. Noteworthy, also, is the hostile official attitude towards German trade. In March and June the *Bourse Gazette* published provocative articles by the War Minister, Sukhomlinow, as to the readiness of France and Russia for war. About the same time St. Petersburg was working with success at Paris for the binding of England more firmly to the Franco-Russian Alliance by military conventions. How far France and England were

cognisant of Russian designs on the Straits we do not know. But it was certainly not accidental that a large part of the French Press became openly bellicose in the spring of 1914. The St. Petersburg Cabinet had "calculated" on opening the floodgates of war so as to steer the Russian Ship of State into the Golden Horn on a high tide of blood.

V

RETROSPECT.

WHILE the storm clouds kept piling up on the horizon the political life of Germany was as though burdened with a strange oppression. Business was booming, the country districts competed in every sort of communal and social activity, employment was plentiful, and the general increase of prosperity was steadily improving the standard of life in the lower classes. Looking at the inventions and almost feverish energy of industry, at our flourishing agriculture, at the broadminded provisions for social welfare, one would have expected to hear in political life some echo of the self-satisfaction with which German successes were celebrated on every festal occasion. But, on the contrary, disgust and discontent spread a cloud of profound depression over a waste of party politics devoid of all progressive impulses. Such a phrase as "national demoralisation" reappeared from the vocabulary of the bad old times and the dark ages.

This is no place for discussions as to how far the spiritual life of the nation had lost those idealist impulses that might have raised the soul of the people

from mere material and mechanical conceptions. Enough that the dominant problems of internal and external policy, in so far as they transcended immediate material interests, in no way entered into the intellectual life of the nation. Such individual instances as there were of attachment to sound political principles were all outside the orbit of parliamentary life. Parliament itself moved still along the old grooves, and the Press presented its labours to the public rather so as to satisfy the demand for sensation than to serve the requirements of political education.

Besides this, political life was suffering from the discomfort always caused by an overdue and artificially delayed development.

The anomaly of declared conservatism in Prussian policy and declared liberalism in imperial policy became more and more detrimental to the relations between the Realm and the Constituent States, already strained over their respective fiscal responsibilities. At the same time the agitation for a radical reinforcement of parliamentary control over public business became more and more lively. In Prussia a sort of parliamentary system had been set going in practice in the control exercised by the Conservatives over the Government to the exclusion of the Left. The parliamentary idea in the Realm, on the other hand, was keenly contended for by a discontented Left. But it was rather a cause of disturbance than a practical procedure to attainable aims, seeing that

no party majority was available that had any external consistency, still less any internal cohesion. I had hoped to clear away the main obstacle to sound progress by reforming the Prussian electoral system. But this reform was wrecked by the resistance of the Conservatives and their raiding tactics, as well as by difficulties that the National Liberals felt called on to raise in the interests of party politics. Moreover, the points on which the Bill broke down made any early re-introduction of it hopeless. Thus the leading political anomalies went on and became worse and worse. While the Left grumbled and girded at its disappointment, the Right was grimly angered at a policy that not only attacked its party power but, in its opinion, assaulted the whole position of Prussia. When and where I was originally credited with having said I wanted to break the stiff neck of Old Prussia, I know not. Anyway, I never said it.

The Government was, of course, shot at from both sides like every unparliamentary Government driven to a policy of compromise. The Left thought its proper line was to apostrophise me abroad and at home as a reactionary obscurantist, while the Right abused me as a disguised democrat. The object of all this criticism was to some extent concealment of the critic's own incapacity. The Right knew better than anyone that an uncompromising conservatism was a practical impossibility, and the Social Democrats could be under no illusion but that a Chancellor

after their own heart could not have kept office for a day. And no reliable working combination could be constituted from the remaining sections. The National Liberals at one time let themselves be seduced by big business, and Pan-German tempters at other times clung to the Liberal traditions of their glorious past. They were openly at variance with the Social Democrats. Progressives swung between the right wing of Social Democracy and the left wing of National Liberalism. The Centre, in touch with all parties, kept clear of all ties, and sometimes supported, sometimes attacked, the Government. The much abused Left Centre acted under pressure of political circumstances and of personal considerations.

In Foreign Affairs there was no less conflict of opinion. Herr von Kiderlen was so highly lauded in the Pan-German Press for sending the *Panther* to Agadir, this being welcomed as indicating at last a stronger foreign policy; while there arose so strong a demand in certain quarters for the annexation of Sherifian territory, that the sensationalism of this step became greatly exaggerated and its true significance seriously distorted. Justifiable excitement at English encroachment, and critical indictments of the meagre results of the Convention of the 4th of November that closed the Moroccan dispute, also, contained features that contributed to this impression. Declared distrust of England made my attempts at *rapprochement* unpopular and encouraged the naval

agitation, while at the same time anxiety as to the Franco-Russian danger subjected me to reproaches of having neglected our land armaments, reproaches that in the course of the war became denunciations. The plain figures of the great armament proposals of 1913 show how unfounded was this accusation. The most important augmentation of our armaments since foundation of the empire was this proposal that I put forward and pressed. The proposals were prepared under great pressure in record time and I accepted as a maximum what the military authorities considered indispensable. Their estimate of the danger would be at least as high as mine. The proposals submitted to the Reichstag represented the War Minister's demands to the very last man, and were passed without reduction. The chief of the General Staff did certainly ask for more formations. But as the War Minister subsequently stated that the necessary personnel was not available, and that in such conditions these supplementary formations would be a weakness rather than a strength, the Kaiser in the last resort confirmed this view. Moreover, General von Heeringen had all he could do to carry these military reinforcements against the claims that were being pressed by the navy.

The Reichstag had since the first and fundamental Naval Act always shown itself generous to the fleet. Sea power cast a spell that many a critic, even of the smallest items in the Budget, could not resist. And

in the country the further you were from the coast the brighter glittered the sea in the light of romance. The fleet was the pet of Germany, and seemed to embody the energies and enthusiasms of the nation. In it the latest achievements of science and the most laborious organisation were proper subjects of admiration. The doubts of a small circle of experts as to whether we were on the right lines in building capital ships at all could make no headway against a fanatical journalism wholly in the service of the prevailing policy. Questionings as to the grave international embarrassment caused us by our naval policy were shouted down by a boisterous agitation. In the fleet itself it was not always clearly realised that a fleet is only an instrument of policy, not a political institution. The direction of the fleet had lain for years in the hands of a man who had arrogated to himself a political authority far beyond his functions, and who had had a lasting influence on the political point of view of an important circle. Whenever an issue arose between the naval authorities and the political administration, the public almost invariably supported the former. Arguments based on considerations of relative naval strengths could be swept aside as timid truckling to the foreigner.

At times I could not avoid the impression that the foreign situation was not being sufficiently considered in relation also to questions that belonged properly to home politics. Thus the affairs of Alsace-Lorraine

were really of international importance, even if we had to assert ourselves on all occasions as master in our own house. The tone of irredentist circles there reflected accurately the tendency in Paris and in the Entente camp. If the tide ran strong in Alsace one might feel sure that in Paris the *revanche* feeling was running high, and that the English Press were showing a lively interest in the settlement of the question. This was noticeably the case in the spring of 1914 when, as we know, the Russian Government were consciously and calculatedly working up a world war. The constitution for Alsace-Lorraine that had been elaborated mainly by the Secretary of State, Delbrück, with unfailing insight, and that was introduced in the Reichstag in 1911, was to be a stage on the road towards autonomy as a Federal State. Riper reflection suggests that a more rapid transition would have been better in view both of the internal and the external situation. But there were insuperable difficulties in the way, due mainly to the view that these provinces were and must remain the military glacis of Germany, and that all political ambitions of these communities must be subordinated to this requirement. The friction between this special strategic conception and general political considerations that had long hampered the administration of the provinces now resulted in an open row. And moreover the Conservatives preferred to look at the suffrage provisions of the proposed constitution rather in the light of their

partisan preference for the peculiar Prussian system than in that of the political interests of a Realm based on very different principles. They combated these liberal provisions with an eye to their possible and undesirable effect on future Prussian legislation.

The conflict between the military and the political point of view came to the front in an even acuter form in the wretched Zabern incident. One can take whatever view one pleases as to what actually happened in the Vosges hill-town, as to how it was handled, and as to the way it was settled, but neither side ever reflected that their respective resentments, however honest and honourable, would be reproduced for the malicious satisfaction of foreign observers in a highly regrettable form.

Generally speaking, the spectacle presented by the internal conditions of Germany led to erroneous conclusions, even when there was no intentional misrepresentation. Our system of government was not only incomprehensible as such to countries under parliamentary *régime*, but the obstinate opposition of our democratically disposed parties engendered the unfounded suspicion that national policy was determined finally by the undemocratic parties. The excesses of Pan-Germans and Militarists all in the end went to discredit the Government and the people as a whole. Undesirable manifestations of sectional feeling, such as Prussian arrogance towards South Germany, no doubt contributed to confirm the

conviction that M. Cambon had come to from studying his secret service reports, that German unity would collapse under the strain of war. The agitation for greater naval and military armaments was interpreted as a symptom of belligerent instincts, and the general discontent was considered evidence that the nation was *novarum rerum cupida.*

It is contrary to every instinct to re-open our own old wounds now that the war has ended in a triumph of falsehood and a Peace signed and sealed by hate—that peace which President Wilson intended should reconcile the peoples. Now, moreover, that the famine with which our enemy has mercilessly scourged a helpless Germany months after the end of the war reminds us that what we thought once was public right has long been submerged in war. But whoever still clings to the belief that mankind at some far future date will recover those ethical convictions born of the centuries will as firmly reject summary and self-righteous incriminations by our enemies as he will renounce unreal and unworthy self-accusations. Such a one will care for nothing but the truth in so far as it can be humanly ascertained.

It is, however, quite conceivable that even those of our opponents who succeeded in preserving unbiassed minds up to the war might have seen in our conditions and in our conduct elements of disturbance that seemed to contradict our oft-repeated professions of pacific intentions. The rising power of Germany

that had been already felt as troublesome in pacific competition as a challenge to claims for supremacy, might seem itself to betray lust for world dominion whenever a boyish and unbalanced ebullience proclaimed that the German spirit could alone deliver the world from evil. In this way—to use a vulgar expression—we often got on the nerves of the World. An English political writer who, though on occasions personally abusive, on the whole avoided extravagant exaggerations, has well expressed this:—"There was in the world only one menace to peace and that menace was the increasing population, the increasing prosperity, and the increasing unrest of the German Empire."* That the growing importance of Germany implied for many Englishmen a menace of war is true. But that German unrest sowed the seed of war in an otherwise peaceably disposed world is false.

In previous pages I have endeavoured to extract such elements from the events of the years 1909 to 1914 as determined the political situation in Europe. For this purpose I have also used documents that only came to our knowledge after outbreak of war. Where this has been done I have expressly said so. And this new material has only shown up more sharply what was already clear enough from what was known before. How, then, do the actual facts appear in respect of subsequent events, for our liability in respect of words is certainly no heavier than that of our enemy.

* Begbie, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

When and where was it that we Germans so behaved as to upset the World. Agadir? However strongly you may condemn the "*Panther* spring," yet the *Panther* would not have been sent to Agadir if the French had not previously marched on Fez. What about the Naval Bill then? Was it more provocative than Lloyd George's speech, and was it not just that speech which was most exploited in favour of the Bill? Well, then, the great Army Bills? Certainly they heated French opinion to boiling point, but even so we were far inferior in numbers to the Franco-Russian hosts—to say nothing of the overwhelming superiority given them by the English Alliance. Even Lloyd George himself, whom no one would accuse of prepossession in favour of Germany, recognised before the war that Germany must have a very strong land army. And, finally, is it not crediting us with an all too perverse duplicity to see in the attempted *rapprochement* that we initiated merely a mask to conceal our mind for war.

And now on the other side. Morocco, Tripoli and the Balkans—everywhere the movements originated in, or were protected by, that combination of Powers that had associated against us before the war, or that, like Italy, was to dissociate itself finally from us during the war. None of these movements were in the remotest degree provoked by Germany. But each of them drove Europe near, and by their reactions ever nearer, to the brink of destruction. Until

at last the Russian Government deliberately decided so to cultivate conditions in Europe that the seeds of war it was sowing broadcast might take root. Facts such as these cannot be got round by any sophistry, and against them such unrest as can be brought home to Germany is as nothing in the balance. Whether the French lust of power, whether Italian *sacro egoismo*, whether Balkan land hunger, whether the lure of an imaginary Russian belief in a historical mission, was the main motive, in all alike the pursuit of national ambitions put the match to the magazine. The question of criminality is a question of causality. And it was the Entente Powers that piled the fuel for the conflagration. Germany laid no faggot on the pyre.

We in Germany have considered that the problem of criminality requires an answer to the question "Whether Germany had just cause for apprehension?" * The numerical inferiority of the armies of Austria-Hungary and Germany, for Italy and Roumania were not to be counted on, compared with those of the group of Powers associated against us is so evident that there is no need to waste words on it. And in relying on the better quality of our troops we had to reckon with the obvious perils of our pent-in position as well as with the almost unlimited man-power of Russia. But in answering this question the political situation must count for even more than a comparison

* Lecture of Prince Max von Baden, Heidelberg, 3rd of February, 1919.

of armaments. On one side the failure of our attempt at an understanding, on the other the ever closer combination of the Entente with Franco-Russian ambitions that could only be realised by European War. Both these were the result of England's rigid adherence to its policy of the Balance of Power. And both, surely, were amply sufficient to justify anxiety—the word apprehension is inapplicable—even though the declared determination of Russia to force a war only obtained documentary proof when the war was already ending. How lightly the sword could be drawn had already been shown by the Russo-Japanese and Boer Wars, and still more recently in Tripoli and in the Balkans. From 1912, but especially and even more emphatically after 1913, the Kaiser was calling my attention to the coalition, like that of Kaunitz, that was being formed against us and that might at any moment fall upon us.*

These utterances were not the result of momentary impulses, but of mature reflection. Since Björkö, the Kaiser had had sufficient experience of Russian unreliability; and he was much too hard hit by the failure of all his attempts at a *rapprochement* with

* Prof. Schiemann has publicly reproached me with having concealed the danger of our position from the Kaiser. This is not so. I never attempted to deceive the Kaiser as to our difficulties. Also the confidential reports which Prof. Schiemann was officially responsible for translating brought the essential facts before the Kaiser. I certainly did ask the Kaiser to inform me of the authority for information thus communicated to him from this quarter, and he agreed to do so.

England, in which his personal sentiments had been engaged, to be under any illusion at all as to the real situation.

M. Jules Cambon, in a despatch of the 22nd of November, 1913, has reported an interview, communicated to him from a thoroughly reliable source, between the Kaiser and the King of the Belgians in the presence of the Chief of the General Staff, von Moltke.* It is there reported that the Kaiser expressed his conviction that war with France was inevitable and must come sooner or later, and that the King drew therefrom the conclusion that the Kaiser was no longer a protagonist of peace. M. Cambon adds his own observations to the effect that he believes the Kaiser had by then been reconciled to opinions previously repugnant to him. This report has been much commented on by French war literature and has been used as evidence for the personal criminality of the Kaiser. While I personally have no knowledge of the interview in question I should not be in any way surprised if the Kaiser, with his impulsive temperament, had made no attempt to conceal his conclusions from the King of the Belgians. But this amounted to nothing more than the expression of a personal opinion to which he had been brought by hard facts.

* No. 6, French Yellow Book. According to French authority the source was King Albert himself. See Pierre Albin *d'Agadir à Serajevo*, p. 78. Reinach (*Histoire de douze jours*, p. 37) states that the Minister Beyens reported the conversation to Cambon on the King's orders.

The inference drawn by M. Cambon, and apparently by King Albert himself, derogatory to the Kaiser's love of peace, was as unjustifiable as if one were to draw conclusions as to the ultimate decision that would be taken by the Kaiser after mature reflection, from the casual and often caustic marginal notes that he scribbled on documents at a first reading. If the military authorities were continually weighing the chances of war in relation to the constantly shifting ratio of armaments—that was no more than the proper duty of a general staff. But neither the Kaiser nor any of his political advisers ever contemplated a preventive war as coming even within the remotest range of their responsibilities.

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

VI

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

THE political literature of our enemies occupied itself long before the war with the future of Austria-Hungary. They openly discussed whether the Hapsburg Empire should be broken up or whether it should be preserved. That the death of the Emperor Francis Joseph would be an evil day for the Monarchy was an axiom shared by others besides our enemies. In Germany there were lively discussions as to what would then follow, and writers, especially those with Pan-German pens, occupied themselves with ambitious schemes for dividing up the estate without troubling as to the possible effect this might have abroad. Before the conclusion of the Entente Cordiale many voices had been raised in France in favour of detaching Austria-Hungary from the Triple Alliance, and of drawing her over to the Franco-Russian camp. With this end in view much clever work was done in Vienna against the German ally by exploiting Pan-German indiscretions and the sentiments of certain circles there that could not forget Königgrätz. If the Triple

Alliance could be broken up, then the door would be bolted and barred against the much discussed advance of Germany in the East. And, as Austrian and Balkan Slavs penetrated more and more into the political publicity of the West, autonomist ideas again came to the front. These ideas took definite shape with the conclusion of the Triple Entente. The general principle of it was the support at all costs of the Slav constituents of the Danube Monarchy. The Czechs were almost openly struggling to free themselves from the State, and the South Slavs were in a perpetual ferment.*

Every demand put forward by these centrifugal forces not only dislocated the solidarity of the Austro-Hungarian Federation but also undermined the whole position of the Central Powers. A natural and necessary complement of the Entente policy was concurrent support of the Slav Balkan States that had an interest in the destruction of the Danube Monarchy. The short-sighted economic policy followed by Austria-Hungary in regard to Serbia had given to the restless activities of the Russian Minister in Belgrade, Hartwig, a favourable opening for fomenting hostility to the Hapsburg neighbour. While the Montenegrin country insignificant as it was, served as a well-subsidised provincial branch of the Pan-

* A voluminous literature deals with these Slav movements. A brief review of them will be found in Ubersberger's supplement to the Teubner work, *Germany and the World War.*

Slavic business centre on the Moskwa. Of course, this development had not followed a direct course. It was not so long ago since England had refused to be diplomatically represented at Belgrade on account of the overthrow of the Obrenovitch dynasty by assassination. But it became more and more the fashion for English and French politicians to bring back reports from their tours in the Slav territories of Austria-Hungary to the effect that the population were impatiently waiting the collapse of the Hapsburg Monarchy, that would be the consequence, it was hoped, of the death of the old Emperor. This view was eagerly accepted and energetically exploited in the political literature of the day. In the Slav territories themselves, agitators were not content with the study of future possibilities, but prepared for direct action through the Press, through pamphlets, through meetings and societies. And with all this the position of the Slavs in the Monarchy was by no means a poor one. It was well known that the circle of the Heir Apparent was occupied with plans for a reconstruction of the State mechanism such as would allow of free developments to its Slav constituent. It is true that these plans assumed that the Monarchy would be able to develop enough vitality to recall the Slav populations to their loyalty to the Austrian State. And it was just this that Pan-Slavism and the Pan-Serb propaganda it supported was concerned with preventing. The Heir Apparent thereby became obnox-

ious to many. He was generally supposed to be strong enough to get the various divergent forces again in hand. But this, again, brought to the front the primary conflict between Slav and German. Probably the community of economic interests might, in course of time, with careful handling, have gradually eliminated a race conflict that belonged to a ruder past. But the nationalism of the Austrian Slavs and their near relations in the Balkans remained dominant, and was driven into hostility to Germany because Russia wished to recruit them for its policy of crippling Austria in the interests of its own expansion, while France and England saw in them a powerful instrument for holding down Germany by disintegrating its Ally.

Thereupon, on the 28th of June, came the murder of Archduke Ferdinand in Serajevo. The bombs used by the assassins had been brought to Bosnia with the connivance of Serbian officers and officials, and the assassins themselves enjoyed the countenance of the Association Narodna Odbrana, supported by the Serbian Government, and working for the secession of the Serbian provinces from Austria-Hungary.

This murder was the bloody signal that Greater Serbia believed its hour was come. But the fatal hour of the Danube Monarchy had also struck. For if it passively suffered this attempt to overthrow it from its status, then its final dissolution could not be long delayed. If, on the other hand, it determined to

bring the Pan-Serb agitators to their senses, and if no third party interfered to prevent it doing so, then a conflagration would have been extinguished that was already attacking not only the House of Austria but the whole habitation of European society. At the same moment that any member of the Entente opposed this last and final effort of Austria-Hungary to preserve its integrity, at that moment the problem of Austria passed out of the region of abstract speculation into that of decisions that would alter the history of the world.

It was for Russia to decide. Russian policy again had it in its power to find a peaceable solution of the Serbian issue. M. Sassonow had himself admitted in conversation with Count Pourtalès that the Serbian Government had deserved a lesson, and a word from St. Petersburg would have sufficed to induce the Serbs to guarantee such satisfaction as would have contented Austria, and would have brought about a *modus vivendi*. While it would be all over with European peace if those in power at St. Petersburg had only ears for the commands of Russia's "historical mission," which, according to the ancient Pan-Slav formula, required not only the protection of the Balkan States but also the patronage of the Slav population of Austria. But we know to-day that a breach of the peace of Europe was just what M. Sassonow had in view because he wanted Constantinople, and therefore required a European War. This, and this alone,

explains once for all every action of Russian policy in July, 1914. But even if M. Sassonow felt some compunction on seeing the war fiend descending in full view, to prepare the way for whom had been "the task of the calculated labours of his Ministry," yet none the less war was what he wrought. He, personally, had been growing more and more favourable to the Pan-Slav ideal. Although he was well versed in Western culture he could be carried away by the idea of Holy Russia as the great, all-powerful, all-protecting Mother of the Slav peoples. For this reason he could not effectively resist the violent pressure brought to bear on him to assert Slav authority on all occasions at all costs. But there was more to it than this. Both military and civil advisers had succeeded in persuading the Tsar in these critical days that he could only save his Crown and Empire if he could divert into war passions the growing discontent in his country, whether due to Pan-Slav excitement or Socialist resentment. Similar suggestions — the experience of this war tempts one to say—similar temptations of the devil—may have misled everywhere shortsighted and unprincipled persons in irresponsible quarters. But in Russia such persons were powers in high places. And those who influenced them were the determined adherents of the acquisition of Constantinople. It was to these war-hawks that M. Sassonow had handed himself over when he decided in consultation with them at that Conference of the

21st of February that Russia must seize the Straits, and could only do so at the cost of a European War.

In order to set the ball a-rolling there was no need for the appeal of the Serbian Crown Prince to the generous heart of the Tsar. When he, on the 24th of July, implored the Tsar "to come with all speed to the help of Serbia" Sassonow had long decided the reply. On the same day a Russian ministerial council resolved to give Serbia military support. On the following day the necessary orders were got from the Tsar, and Sassonow was already trying in the French Embassy to assure himself of British support. Buchanan has reported this interview very fully, and records a statement by Sassonow that Russia would not hesitate at war if it could rely on France.* This proviso of the Russian Minister must be read in a strictly diplomatic sense. For M. Sassonow knew well enough when he said this to Sir G. Buchanan that M. Poincaré, who as early as 1912 "had contemplated war without regret," would most certainly co-operate. He only wanted to know what England thought, because he could not make war against the will of England. Great Britain, allied as it was with Japan, had certainly resources enough for forcing Russia to give up all thought of war. M. Sassonow would only venture to open wide the gate of war, whose lock he had already picked, provided he could count on an armed England taking

* Blue Book, No. 17.

its stand in the deadly breach. Everything depended on the attitude of England. And what did England do ?

The possibility of war that had, of course, at once presented itself to Sir E. Grey, had evoked from the English statesman strong expressions of abhorrence. He recognised that even from an English standpoint the Austro-Serbian dispute did not in itself require international treatment. If the ultimatum to Serbia did not lead to a collision between Austria and Russia England had no cause to trouble about it. But he did nothing to localise the conflict. From the beginning he took it as a matter of course that Russia would intervene, and counted on this. No sooner had Russia made the cause of Serbia its own than he accepted this. And not only that. Not only did he fail to use any such strong language in St. Petersburg as might still have been effective, but, on the contrary, he plainly gave the Russian Cabinet to understand that he was unwilling to use such language. He told Prince Lichnowsky on the 24th of July that he felt that in view of the form of the Austrian ultimatum he was quite powerless to exercise a restraining influence over Russia. The English statesman even thought it necessary to inform M. Paul Cambon beforehand of his intention to make this communication to the German Ambassador. Did Sir E. Grey imagine that Cambon would enshrine this interesting communication in the secrecy of his heart ? Did he not know perfectly well that his

Russian colleague would have the benefit of it at once? And that was all that Sassonow wanted to know.

In regard to the Serbs, Grey carried his non-intervention so far as to instruct the Chargé d'Affaires in Belgrade that, while recommending the Serbs to make concessions in certain formal points, he should otherwise advise them to answer as they might consider best in the interests of Serbia. The Pythian priestess gave no more encouraging message to Crœsus. But the 27th of July clearly relieved the St. Petersburg authorities of their last doubts. On that day Grey informed the Russian Ambassador that the impression that England would in any case stand aside must be modified. The First Naval Squadron had been instructed not to disperse after the manœuvres. That was a fairly strong encouragement. At the same time, Grey informed the Austrian Ambassador of the concentration of the Squadron, and added that England could not disperse its forces in view of the possibility of a war. That was an equally strong threat, even though Grey denied that it was such. But there must have been other additional data relieving Russia of all remaining doubt as to England's attitude. The much quoted despatch of the Belgian Minister in St. Petersburg suggests this. M. de l'Escaille writes on the 30th of July: To-day one is firmly convinced in St. Petersburg that England will stand by France. "This support

is a factor of the first importance, and has largely contributed to giving the war party the upper hand." And on the same day *Reuter's* correspondent in St. Petersburg sent the much-discussed telegram to London that declared what an immense impression the sailing of the British fleet from Portland had made. This, in combination with pacific assurances from Japan, more than confirmed the firm decision of Russia to try the arbitrament of war. Thus did Sir E. Grey stultify his own and our attempts at mediation.

In the preface to our White Book it is stated that England laboured "shoulder to shoulder" with us in the cause of peace. Our then imperfect knowledge of the English attitude permitted this conclusion, that has since been frequently exploited by English journalism as a German recognition of English pacifism. But if we wished to-day to maintain this view we should be refuted by the official publications of our opponents themselves, who have thrown quite a sufficient light on London's share in the diplomatic prelude to the war.

Were our own attempts at mediation essentially hopeless? When the crisis was at its acutest we had succeeded in bringing Vienna to declare expressly that it laid no claim to any Serbian soil, that it would not impair the Sovereignty of Serbia, and only proposed a temporary military occupation of Serbian territory. We earnestly advocated in Vienna the

acceptance of the mediation desired by Grey, and in spite of the strongest pressure had failed. We had again restored direct conversations between Vienna and St. Petersburg. In this latter connection I myself said to Count Berchtold: "While we are quite ready to fulfil our treaty obligations, we must refuse to let ourselves be drawn into a World conflagration by Austria-Hungary, owing to the latter ignoring our advice." Our action in Vienna had been effective. But we could not save peace because St. Petersburg was recalcitrant. And St. Petersburg refused because England did not curb its bellicosity. There was no want of English *démarches* in St. Petersburg, for Grey did not desire war as such. But these never went beyond lukewarm lectures, and he allowed his advice to be neglected without protest. As the tide of militarism ran higher and higher in St. Petersburg he did nothing decisive to dam it. The various English measures for mediation had always presented the aspect of pressure on Vienna, while pressure on St. Petersburg such as that which we had applied in Vienna was conspicuous by its absence. That is the real reason why our mediation proved in practice to be hopeless.

The procedure we had noticed in the Haldane mission was reproduced in the British attitude on this occasion.

At that time England was seeking an understanding with Germany, but would not hear of anything that

might aggrieve France, which was working in a vicious circle. Now Grey wanted to preserve peace, but only provided Russian ambitions were not affected, and that was even more of a *reductio ad absurdum*. As England had sown so must she reap. Sir E. Grey had tied his own hands by his ever deeper dependence on the Franco-Russian Alliance, and by fortifying that Alliance of his own free will with military conventions. He was no longer free. He clearly had the feeling that after such action his honour no longer allowed him to speak strongly to his friends on the Neva.

Neither was Germany free. But it was not tied to the same extent. Even at the most critical moment our treaty relationship with Austria-Hungary had not hindered us from taking the most emphatic action to impose such moderation as was required in the interests of peace on our friends and allies. But had we any option as to whether we should leave Austria to its fate in so vital a question as this ?

We had failed in drawing the poison fang of the Franco-Russian Alliance by coming to an understanding with England. England had clearly indicated to that alliance that it would support its policy not only diplomatically but militarily. The policy of the Alliance was bellicose. Poincaré was a representative of the *revanche*. Russia was setting itself to march on Constantinople, and its route lay through Berlin and Vienna. The Russian battalions were

multiplied by French money from year to year. France had brought in three years' service under Russian pressure, and was neither able nor willing to go on enduring it for any length of time. Peaceable international co-operation was not the object of the Cabinets concerned. No angel of peace had laid the restless spirit of the Boer raid, of the Russo-Japanese War, of the Tripoli breach of the peace, of the Balkan conspiracy. The Great States were only occupied with self-seeking struggles for material power, and no murder *en masse* seemed too great for the acquisition and assimilation of such power. German policy saw the existence of Germany as a Great Power balanced on the point of hostile bayonets. It saw its one reliable ally doomed to early destruction if denied the power of damaging the mines that had been driven under the foundations of its house. If this ally collapsed or deserted to the enemy's camp from the failure of its friends to protect its vital interests, then Germany would be completely isolated. It would be choked to death by a ring of enemies, banded together in a common campaign for World dominion by jealous dislike for a growing commercial rival, by Slav race hatred against Teutons, and by lowering ill-will against the victor of 1870.

And that is the reason why German policy thought it proper to approve Austria's decision to take action against Serbia in the form of a renewed assurance of its adherence to the alliance.

I am well aware that in view of the subsequent course taken by the war such reasoning as this—or indeed any line of argument at all—can be waved aside. But those who arraign us reasonably and who are not merely out after scapegoats are entitled to ask why German policy was not so conducted as to avoid being placed on the horns of this dilemma. I think that this question largely over-estimates the freedom of action allowed us in our decisions of the last decade. Germany also had fallen under the spell of the ideal of power then dominating the whole world. If we try to find out what was in Bismarck's mind we see that his constant concern as to his "*cauchemar des Coalitions*," as to Germany having reached the saturation point, and as to restraint in naval and colonial questions, all point to his realising the perils that encompassed a Germany that had, like all great empires of the World, been built up by force. Germany had thereafter grown in strength so exuberantly, so precipitately, that it had been forced to take its place in World policy and been infected with the ideals of power peculiar to the period. This had launched it on a new course that no longer could steer clear of the reefs that Bismarck had given a wide offing. Our naval and our oriental policy are probably the most characteristic features of this new line. No German statesman would have been strong enough to put the helm over on a different course unless he could have assured his people that in all

human probability the great world conflicts in which Germany had become involved could be solved by peaceful negotiation and not by the sword. And the only way to this—I keep on coming back to it—was through an understanding with England. France was given up to its ideal of *revanche*, Russia to its historical mission in the Balkans and Straits, Austria to its internal difficulties, and none of these could take the lead. Germany and England seemed to me the only Powers free to act and that were not being driven by some fundamental force towards some particular change in the *status quo*. Lord Haldane will no doubt remember an evening at my house when I explained to him at length that a real understanding between our countries would guarantee peace and gradually guide the Powers away from the spectre of militarist imperialism to the opposite pole of a peaceable and amicable co-operation. But even he preferred the supremacy secured by British Dreadnoughts and French friendship.

But as Germany had thus been brought up short against an obstinate determination not to free the European system of coalitions of its military menace, but rather to augment and aggravate it, there was no question but that Germany could not pursue alone a road on which no one would accompany it. Germany had to look the brutal facts in the face, and recognise that the policy of the Cabinets was inspired by no great human principles, but that statesmanship

would or could aspire to nothing higher than staking its ambitions on the chances of war. German policy was thus forced to have recourse to palliatives in the hope that the imminent evil might ultimately be prevented by procrastination. But since it had been denied to Germany to give a more friendly character to the opposing Power Group, so now Germany was determined to do nothing that could weaken its own Group. And this was the final reason why alliance with the Danube Monarchy was the cornerstone of our policy. We had successfully saved this policy from being compromised by conflict with Russia during the Balkan wars. We had even connived at the Russian designs on Constantinople by repeated assurances to the Russian Cabinet that we would make no difficulty in the Straits question, thereby maintaining our traditional policy of not allowing ourselves to be used as a cat's paw in this matter by those more directly interested.*

* Russia raised this question in Berlin last in 1911; since when they had not again approached us as to their ambitions in the Straits. The St. Petersburg Cabinet had disavowed and subsequently recalled their Ambassador at Constantinople, Tcharikow, who since 1911 had been pressing the opening of the Straits, and this on account of British opposition. His successor, M. de Giers, in a long conversation in March, 1914, with the German Ambassador, explained his political programme, should he be called on to succeed M. Sassonow. This programme was based on a Russo-German *rapprochement*, and while guaranteeing Turkish territorial integrity was to go far to satisfy Russian ambitions there. Herr von Wangenheim was very sceptical as to this proposal, and with what justification has since been seen from the Bolshevik publications. M de Giers had indeed taken part in the much quoted Conference

Could we have answered the question by sacrificing Austria? If Austria had fallen the Slav world would have secured the success of centuries. Such an uncontested conquest by Moscow would have inaugurated an epoch in which Russia would have pressed heavily on the West. Germany would only have survived the fall of Austria as a vassal to the Eastern potentate. The era of Nicolas I. would have been revived for us under Nicolas III. in somewhat different conditions. The oppressors of Germany could then have determined the day at their ease on which Germany should cease to exist as a Great Power.

I consider such a capitulation would have been impossible.

A legend that has been given wide circulation assigns the origin of the war to a Crown Council that the Kaiser is said to have held at Potsdam on the 5th of July, 1914. Even Germans have believed this fable, although our opponents, who would certainly

of 21st of February, 1914, in which military action in the Straits was discussed, without, so far as the protocol shows, recording any dissentient view. That, at the very moment when the Tsar was ratifying Sassonow's schemes, he would have succeeded in getting his consent to a policy of preserving Turkey on the basis of a Russo-German understanding, seems little likely. If M. de Giers had been carrying on a policy of his own he could have been let drop as easily as was Tcharikow. And if, as successor to Sassonow, he had been faced with the question how he was to reconcile a policy of Russo-German *rapprochement* with an intimate relationship to the Western Powers, he would no doubt have reproduced the experience of Potsdam. This could not be put to the test because Sassonow remained in power and put through his war policy.

not have overlooked such a find, say nothing about such a Crown Council in their official publications. Moreover, any investigation, however slight, must have shown that the majority of those reported as having been present could not then have been at Potsdam or even in Berlin.

As a matter of fact, what happened was this: On the 5th of July, 1914, Count Szogyenyi, Austrian Ambassador, after lunching with the Emperor, handed him an autograph letter of the Emperor Francis Joseph, together with a memorandum of his Government. This memorandum drew up a comprehensive Balkan programme of a far-reaching character, in which the Russian schemes were to be checkmated by strong diplomatic counter moves. This policy looked for support to Bulgaria and Turkey as against a hostile Serbia, and instead of a Roumania that was no longer reliable. The object was a Balkan Alliance exclusive of Serbia under the ægis of the Central Powers. The Serajevo incident was adduced as evidence that the conflict between Austria and Serbia was irreconcilable, and that the Monarchy must reckon with an obstinate and aggressive hostility from Serbia. The Emperor's manuscript summarised the argument briefly, and suggested that the pacific policy of the Powers was threatened if the agitation in Belgrade was left to itself. The Kaiser received both documents with the remark that he could only reply after consulting his Chancellor. On the after-

noon of the same day the Kaiser received me and the Under-Secretary of State, Zimmermann, who was representing the Secretary of State, von Jagow, then on leave. This was in the park of the new Palace at Potsdam. No one else was present. I had already made myself acquainted with the gist of the Austrian documents, a copy of which had been communicated to Herr Zimmermann. After I had reviewed their contents the Kaiser declared that he could not let himself be under any illusion as to the gravity of the position into which the Danube Monarchy had been brought by the Greater Serbia propaganda. It was not our business, however, to advise our ally what it must do in respect of the bloody deed at Serajevo. Austria-Hungary must settle that for itself. We must all the more abstain from any direct action or advice, as we must labour with every means to prevent the Austro-Serbian dispute developing into an international conflict. But the Emperor Francis Joseph must also be given to know that we would not desert Austria-Hungary in its hour of peril. Our own vital interests required the unimpaired maintenance of Austria. It seemed a good plan to stretch out a hand to Bulgaria, but this must be done without giving a slap in the face to Roumania.

These views of the Kaiser corresponded with my own opinions. On my return to Berlin I received Count Szogyenyi and assured him that the Kaiser

fully realised the danger of the Pan-Slav and Greater Serb propaganda. In respect of the attitude of Roumania and the efforts to establish a new Balkan Alliance against Austria-Hungary we were prepared to support Austrian attempts to win Bulgaria for the Triple Alliance. In Bukharest we should work for a friendly orientation of Roumanian policy. In the questions at issue between Austria and Serbia the Kaiser could take no line as they were outside his competence. But the Emperor Francis Joseph might feel every confidence that the Kaiser would take his stand loyally beside Austria in accordance with his treaty obligations and traditional friendship.

On the 6th of July the Kaiser went on his northern journey, and replied from Bornholm on the 14th of July in the same sense to the Emperor's letter. And with this we may take leave of the legend of a Crown Council and the decisions taken there. No Crown Council was ever held.

Further, it has been asserted that we used pressure to bring Austria to a warlike decision. This version has of late received colour from a despatch of the Bavarian Chargé d'Affaires, von Schoen, of the 18th of July, 1914, recently published by Kurt Eisner. I cannot, of course, say whether Herr von Schoen rightly understood the communications made to him by the Foreign Office and by other diplomatists. But I doubt it. Presumably he confused them with information he got from other sources. Our only

concern in this respect was that Vienna, if did decide to treat, should not come to weak and vacillating decisions. This would have made the situation worse, not better. But this in no way obscured the general line we followed, and that line is clearly indicated in the reply to Count Szogyenyi, and was never abandoned.

We have been given to understand from other quarters, that after approving the Austrian action we should have taken over entire control of it. Especially are we reproached because Austria issued the Serbian ultimatum without our previous knowledge, and without our having approved its contents. But I am still of opinion that we should have made a mistake if we had tried to avoid this reproach. Apart from the fact that the Vienna Cabinet had on previous occasions, and particularly during the Balkan wars, made us feel that we had prejudiced Austrian policy by our moderating interventions—though such sentiments as between mutually dependent allies are undesirable—yet this consideration was not of prime importance. But we must remember that we should have at once given an international scope to the Austro-Serbian dispute if we had converted the Austrian into an Austro-German action. We should have lost thereby every possibility of localising the conflict, or failing that of mediating it internationally. For we should have been bound by the terms and by the form of an ultimatum that had

been expressly approved, and we should have been debarred from the whole function of intervention that we did in fact discharge, and in which we should have succeeded had it not been cold-shouldered by the other side. Of course, we continually demanded that the Vienna Cabinet should keep us *au courant.* And that we gave *carte blanche* to the Ballhausplatz is only one of the myths that have blossomed so abundantly during the war. We did ascertain through Herr von Tschirschky the general lines of the demands that Austria was making on Serbia. Nor did we consider that we could disapprove them in principle. The text of the ultimatum was communicated to me by Herr von Jagow, who had received it late in the evening of the 28th of July, with the observation that he considered it too severe. He said the same to the Ambassador, and expressed to him dissatisfaction that by being notified so late we had been wholly deprived of all opportunity of expressing an opinion on so important a document. The Ambassador's information was indeed to the effect that the ultimatum had already been sent to Belgrade, where it was to be handed over the following morning and simultaneously published in Vienna.

Those, then, are the facts. They refute the allegation advanced by the other side that we had collaborated in the ultimatum, and strengthened it wherever possible, and that in any case we had had cognizance of the document at a time when we could

have modified it either in form or in tenour. There is not a word of truth in all this.

Was the ultimatum, then, too severe? Accusers of Germany who appear to care for nothing but convicting Germany of the guilt for the war deduce from this severity the bellicose intentions of the Central Powers. Other critics see in it at least the immediate cause of war, and Sir E. Grey, as already noted, observed to our Ambassador that the form of the ultimatum hindered him from pacifying St. Petersburg. For my part, I deplored the severity of the ultimatum because it could give the impression that the Central Powers desired a world war. But in view of our mediatory activity no one could really remain under such an impression except at the instigation of an ill-will that seems to be inseparable from politics. Practically speaking, Austria could only master the Serbian danger if it handled it severely. Keeping on the gloves would only have encouraged the Greater Serbia propaganda and enraged Russia. It would have been better not to have put up a fist at all. Only a strong decision could check the dissolution of the Austrian Monarchy and, however paradoxical it may sound, also save the peace for any length of time.

Was it then inevitable that an Austro-Serbian war must lead to a European War? *

* Prof. Hans Delbrück has written very much to the point in this question in the January and April numbers of the Prussian Year Book of 1919.

This also is a question in which moral criminality and war causality are interwoven. Austria-Hungary made war on Serbia in order to ensure its own survival, and Germany covered its ally for the same reason. Both were acting under force of self-preservation. But when Russia fomented a world war out of the Serbian war, its motive was its assumed mission of protecting the Slavs and appropriating the Straits, wherein Russia was acting not for its self-preservation but for its expansion. The international anarchy in which we have hitherto lived and apparently must go on living, knows no moral code that allows of a final judgment as to the ethical virtue or viciousness of any particular political action. War is a last, but also a legitimate, resort for the realisation of national aims. I cannot say whether this view will allow of the bellicosity of Russia being acquitted as "moral" in view of the atrocities of this world war. But whoever recognises a movement for expansion as a moral motive for war must admit that a means to self-preservation must take ethical precedence of it, and if the statesman cannot base his calculations on the moral considerations entertained by his opponent, yet he cannot leave out of count altogether such considerations without which the life of communities is as inconceivable as that of individuals. And the following points cannot be overlooked in a review of the situation in July, 1914.

Although we had at the time no knowledge of the

Tsar's approval of the Sassonow proposals of February, 1914, yet we could not for a moment be in doubt as to the general tension of the European situation. Only the most immoderate and malicious criticism could accuse me of having stumbled blindfold to destruction. But all efforts for peace were bound to fail against the strong will to war of Russia—a will that England could not soften. But was the road to peace blocked by political necessity had not Russia intentionally barred it? The answer is that Russia had been deprived of every objective reason for war with the assurance given it as to the integrity of Serbia, and with the resumption of direct conversations, temporarily interrupted, between St. Petersburg and Vienna. Both, as I have said, were due to our urgent counsels. If St. Petersburg had negotiated direct with Vienna on this basis, then it is hard to see why an understanding could not have been reached with the help of the English at St. Petersburg and of ourselves at Vienna, which might have been accepted by Russia without an insupportable loss of prestige. Sir E. Grey, too, considered that mediation was possible, even after an Austrian invasion of Serbia, provided Austria in so doing declared it would retain the occupied territory only until it had received satisfaction from Serbia, and also gave assurances that it would not advance further.* But if the view is held that Russia could brook no thwarting

* Blue Book, No. 88.

whatever of its Balkan schemes, that we should have realised this, and should not therefore have supported Austria in its proceedings against Serbia—this means really that Germany should have committed *hara-kiri*. I am not prepared to admit that the course we took can only be explained as a political miscalculation. But one confession I must make. And that is that when the crisis came on I assumed that even a Russian mind would shrink from taking that fearful plunge except under extreme necessity, and that I believed also that England, when faced with the final decision, would study the peace of the world before its own friendships.

The point has been raised in respect of our mediation that we refused Grey's proposal for an Ambassadors' Conference in London. Different versions, emanating from hostile pens, have tried to make it appear that we in general opposed the mediating activities of the Powers. The most cursory glance at the documents will show at once that this was not so. A distinction must be made between the mediation proposals of the four Powers not directly concerned with the Serbian dispute—England, France, Germany and Italy—and the proposal for the summoning of an Ambassadors' Conference in London. The German Government from the first and throughout favoured proposals for general mediation. In this we took the view that it should take the form of mediation, not as between Vienna and Belgrade, but as between Vienna

and St. Petersburg for the avoidance of a European War. But the proposal for an Ambassadors' Conference presented itself to us in the form of an English inquiry that contemplated a meeting of Sir E. Grey with the French, Italian and German Ambassadors in London for discussing what measures could be taken to guard against complications. This was equivalent to an intervention of the Great Powers in the Austro-Serbian dispute. There are two passages, one in the English Blue Book,* and one in the French Yellow Book † that throw light on this scheme for intervention. While Grey has principally in mind joint pressure on St. Petersburg and Vienna, Paul Cambon is trying definitely to draw diplomatic action into mediation between Austria and Serbia. The opinion of the Russian Ambassador is thereupon sought, who approves of the attempt in this form. And if these preparatory preliminaries be examined, the view taken by us of the Ambassadors' Conference in London must be held to have been justified. Namely, that it was an attempt of the Triple Entente to bring the Austro-Serbian dispute before the tribunal of Europe or rather before that of the Entente. For no one could suppose that the German member of the Conference could have made head against those of England and France, both in the Russo-Serb interest, and against the Italians. No impartiality could have been expected from such a tribunal, especially

* Blue Book, No. 10. † Yellow Book, No. 32.

at a moment when Russia was already making comprehensive military preparations. The matter would merely have been protracted indefinitely, as Paul Cambon had said should be done so as to gain time by mediation in Vienna. But Austria was above all concerned with a prompt and precise settlement of the dispute. It would have been a heavy blow to the interests of our ally if we had participated in such an arbitration, as von Jagow rightly termed it, so long as Austria did not itself desire the interference of the Powers in its settlement with Serbia. We should only have been open to reproach if we had refused every offer of mediation. Whereas we did quite the contrary, as is shown by our urgent action in Vienna and by the Kaiser's telegram to the Tsar. While it was Grey himself who withdrew his proposal for a conference when we restored the direct exchange of opinion between St. Petersburg and Vienna, which it must be remembered Grey had expressly described as the best possible method.* Moreover, it must be observed that St. Petersburg also preferred discussion with Vienna to the Ambassadors' Conference. And when Grey later renewed his proposal for a mediation of the four Powers, as between Russia and Austria, we not only agreed but strove with all our power to get Vienna to accept it. Germany cannot therefore be accused of negligence. And if out of consideration for our ally we did not at once proclaim to the world

* Blue Book, No. 67

the strong pressure we were applying, we were all the more bound to observe such reticence in that nothing was made public as to similar emphatic action in St. Petersburg. There was indeed one difference. England never exercised, or never exercised enough, the great authority it enjoyed in St. Petersburg in order to create conditions suitable for mediation. It neglected to provide for the principal point, and that was complete suspension of military preparations.

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The Kaiser returned from his northern journey on the 27th of July. I had advised him to undertake this journey in order to avoid the attention that would have been aroused by his giving up an outing that he had for years been accustomed to take at this time of year. The French take the view that after the Kaiser's return there was a change for the worse in tone. I saw nothing of the kind, though I was in constant personal touch with the Kaiser. Quite the reverse; he would not hear of any step being omitted that might be conducive to peace. Our strong pressure on Vienna corresponded with his innermost conviction. The attempt personally to influence the Tsar and the King of England was the consequence of his own initiative. Of course, he was well aware of the weakness and vacillation of the Tsar, as well as of the constitutional position of the King of England that only allowed of any real influence to a personality of peculiar strength. But he wished to leave no road

untried. It was incomprehensible to his deep and passionate love of peace that his cousins on the Russian and English thrones should not have the same sense of responsibility as himself, and be prepared to stake everything to stop the world catastrophe. As a matter of fact, his words did make a deep impression on the Tsar. They actually caused him to order the suspension of the general mobilisation that was already in progress—as we now know from the Sukhomlinow trial. But the military authorities did not obey, but told the Tsar lies to the effect that his orders had been carried out. Then, on the morning of the 31st of July, Generals Sukhomlinow and Yanuschkewitsch, with the help of Sassonow, finally convinced the Tsar himself of the necessity of mobilisation. To the best of my knowledge Sassonow made no attempt to counteract their representations. Our enemies deduce from the action that we took in respect of the Russian general mobilisation that we had originated and were responsible for the war. There are Germans who have associated themselves in this respect with our enemies. It is well known that other Germans are of opinion that we were certainly neither obliged to require that Russia should withdraw its mobilisation, nor to declare war, when our requirement was not fulfilled.

Obviously there were only three different grounds conceivable for the Russian general mobilisation. Either Russia was bluffing in the belief that it could

thereby subsequently curry favour with the Central Powers, or Russia believed itself to be threatened, or, finally, Russia wanted war. I do not see how there can be any other alternative.

That it was a bluff seems only credible if Sassonow had no clear idea as to what must be the result of a mobilisation. But this seems contrary to all the evidence. I had already instructed Count Pourtalès on the 26th of July to point out to Sassonow that preparatory military measures on the part of Russia would compel us to take counter-steps that would practically amount to the mobilisation of the army. But such mobilisation meant war. The Count at once carried out these instructions, and let no day pass without impressing on the Russian Minister the fearful responsibility involved in preliminaries to mobilisation. On the 29th of July I repeated the warning and stated that Germany would be forced to mobilise if the Russian measures for mobilisation were maintained, and that then a European war could scarcely be prevented. The English and French Governments also left Sassonow under no doubt as to how they themselves looked on mobilisation, although they certainly never said the word that might have stopped mobilisation. On the 25th of July Sir George Buchanan expressed to M. Sassonow "his earnest hope that Russia would not bring on war prematurely by mobilising," and, "further, did his best to urge the Minister to prudence, and to point

out to him that if Russia mobilised Germany would not content itself with mobilisation and leaving Russia to mobilise, but would probably at once declare war." The language used by the French Government was perhaps not so plain, but quite sufficiently unmistakable. "It considered that it was desirable that Russia, in taking precautionary and defensive measures,* should not at once take any action that would give Germany a pretext for mobilising its forces either partly or wholly."

Further, it must be assumed that M. Sassonow knew what the Tsar himself had ordered. In the Russian orders for mobilisation, 30th of September, 1912, we find, "It is the Emperor's order that the notification of mobilisation should be equivalent to the notification of a state of war with Germany," and the following order lays down a general instruction for the troops on the North-west front: "As soon as concentration is completed we shall proceed to advance against the armed forces of Germany with the object of carrying the war on to their own territory." It has been positively asserted that this mobilisation order had been withdrawn. But, in any case, it shows that in St. Petersburg there had been for long a clear idea as to what mobilisation meant. It is therefore impossible to assume that M. Sassonow acted unwittingly, and therewith the theory of a bluff falls to the ground.

* Blue Book, No. 17. Yellow Book, No. 101.

DATES OF MOBILISATION

Did Russia mobilise, then, because it felt itself threatened? Let us cast a glance at the different dates of mobilisation. On the 25th of July Serbia mobilised on receipt of the Austrian ultimatum, and on the same 25th of July a ministerial council, held in presence of the Tsar, "contemplated mobilisation of the 18th Army Corps intended for operations against Austria." This partial mobilisation was equivalent to a general mobilisation against the Austrian front, and was to be put in execution "as soon as Austria proceeded to take military action against Serbia." The Minister for Foreign Affairs was instructed and empowered "to determine the time of mobilisation."* It would seem, therefore, that Russia, from the very first moment, came to the support of Serbia against Austria by mobilisation at least, and, curiously enough, left the decision as to this military measure in the hands of the Foreign Minister.

Monsieur Sassonow did actually put the decision of the ministerial council in force on the 29th of July after Austria had, on the day before, that is on the 28th of July, declared a partial mobilisation that was however exclusively against Serbia and simultaneous with the declaration of war against Serbia. The respective strengths of the troops mobilised on the 29th of July show that twenty-four Austro-Hungarian divisions were confronting thirty-nine Russian and fifteen Serbian, in all, fifty-four divisions. The

* Yellow Book, No. 50.

Russo-Serb forces were therefore twice as strong as the Austrian. Up to five o'clock on the afternoon of the 1st of August, when Germany mobilised, the relative strengths were unchanged, at least on the Austrian side. Under these conditions, to assert that Russia ordered the mobilisation of its whole army, as it did at latest on the 30th of July, from apprehension at the military menace directed against it is nothing less than absurd. At any rate, M. Sassonow explained the general mobilisation to Paris through the French Ambassador as being due "to the general mobilisation of Austria, and to the preparations for mobilisation that Germany has for six days secretly but uninterruptedly taken"; while he explained it to London through the English Ambassador in similar though somewhat less strong terms.* Both these statements are incorrect. The Russian orders for mobilisation were publicly posted in the streets of St. Petersburg in the early morning of the 31st of July, while the Austrian mobilisation was first declared in the late morning of the 31st of July, and consequently some hours after the Russian mobilisation had been posted, and at least a night after it had been ordered. The assertion that Germany had for six days, that is since the 25th of July, secretly and uninterruptedly prepared for mobilisation is also an invention. We had only taken such precaution as other countries, and in some respects even less than

* Yellow Book, No. 118. Blue Book, No. 113.

they. We had recalled the fleet from Norwegian waters, even as England had kept together her fleet which would otherwise have been dispersed after the manœuvres. We had, like France, recalled our troops from the training camps and from manœuvres. We had stopped leave from certain Army Corps only, whereas France had cancelled all leave on the 27th of July. "Secret" mobilisations may be possible in vast Russia, but were simply out of the question in Germany, as the Russian military authorities must have very well known. Hundreds of thousands of men and thousands of horses and wagons cannot be "secretly" mobilised in a country with communications in the condition they are in in Germany.*

This all shows clearly that the Russian Government based its order for a general mobilisation on false data, and it is impossible to believe that they could have unwittingly made use of such incorrect information as they produced in evidence of the alleged

* Much later during the war St. Petersburg remembered an extra edition of the *Berlin Lokalanzeiger* of the 30th of July that falsely reported that the German Army had been mobilised. So far as could be ascertained from the official inquiry that was at once instituted, it appeared that employées of this paper had been instigated by quite unconscionable excess of professional zeal. The Secretary of State, von Jagow, at once informed the Russian, French and English Ambassadors that the report was false, and M. Swerbejew at once communicated this information to St. Petersburg. If the canard of the *Lokalanzeiger* had influenced the decisions of the Russian Government, we should certainly have found something about it in the official publications, and especially in the telegrams referred to above from the French and English Ambassadors to their Governments. But these latter make no mention of the incident.

Austrian mobilisation. Scarcely anything could throw a clearer light on the real motives of those in power at St. Petersburg.

It is obviously absurd to talk of military menace to Russia, and the Russian authorities will scarcely be able to maintain that our political attitude gave proof of an intention to go to war. M. Sassonow had more than once heard from our Ambassador that we had used strong pressure at Vienna in a mediatory sense, and he knew the text of the Kaiser's telegrams to the Tsar. The most suspicious could only have assumed that this was all done for the sake of appearances if our evil intention had been indicated in some unmistakable manner. But there was no such indication. And as the Russian Government could not adduce any German or Austrian measures of a military character, just as little can they show any preparations on our part other than military. The German Government have indeed been reproached by Germans, not without ground, for having omitted to make such preparations. The assertion that Russia mobilised because it considered itself endangered is an invention that is without foundation in fact.

There remains, then, only the third alternative open to the most critical observer. And this is that Russia mobilised because it desired war. The Russian mobilisation was ordered in spite of the fact that Vienna was ready to enter into direct conversations with St. Petersburg on the Serbian issue, in spite of the

fact that Vienna had accepted the Grey mediation, in spite of the fact that Vienna had given assurances as to the integrity of Serbia, in spite of the fact that Vienna was prepared not to go beyond such a temporary occupation of a part of Serbian territory as England itself had considered acceptable, finally, in spite of the fact that Austria had only mobilised against Serbia and that Germany had not yet mobilised at all. Consequently, when the telegraph brought us news of the mobilisation on the morning of the 31st of July, we could not be other than convinced that Russia desired war under all conditions. And the revelations that have subsequently been made as to the general plans of Sassonow, and the events preceding the Russian mobilisation, must, I think, be held to exclude all possible doubt, and to prove doubly and trebly that we were right in then thinking as we did. And that we were right also in not attributing any further controlling influence over the course of events in St. Petersburg to the solemn pledge of the Tsar that his troops would take no provocative action pending negotiations with Austria.

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We were hot in complete agreement among ourselves as to how we were to proceed officially. The War Minister, General von Falkenhayn, thought it was a mistake to declare war on Russia, not because he considered that war could be avoided after Russia had mobilised, but because he feared that the political

effect would be prejudicial to us. The Chief of the General Staff, General von Moltke, was on the other hand in favour of declaring war, because our plan of mobilisation, providing for a war on two fronts, required that military actions be immediately taken, and because our hope of success against an enormous superiority in numbers was dependent on the extreme rapidity of our movements. I myself agreed with the view of General von Moltke. I was, of course, under no illusion as to the effect on the question of responsibility for the war that our declaration of war would have and actually did have. But it was impossible at a moment when the existence of the country was entirely dependent on military action to oppose the military arguments, quite reasonable in themselves, of that general who was responsible for military operations. The unanimity of the German people was in no way impaired by the declaration of war against Russia.

It is well known that we have been reproached by other quarters in a contrary sense. The procrastination in mobilisation and in beginning military operations is said to have done us irremediable harm. Only military experts can judge whether a gain of two or three days would have been an important military advantage. But no one in his senses could maintain that through not having struck a few days earlier we lost the war, and that is really all that matters. The same reply can be made to the further reproach that

we had made insufficient economic and financial preparations for war, and that, politically speaking, the war was badly staged. These criticisms, which have already been referred to, are not entirely unfounded. The experience of the war has shown that Germany should have kept in reserve a considerable store of cereals, food-stuffs and raw materials. There was indisputably some negligence in this not having long ago been seen to. But the omission could not be made good at short notice. Such preparations were quite impossible in view of the uncanny rapidity with which the crisis developed; that is to say, preparations that could have been of any real relief to us in enduring a four years' war. The loss of the war could as little have been avoided by stopping exportation of wheat and the sailing of the few vessels, however important some of them were, as it could have been by importing such grain as we could have got hold of in the course of July, 1914. Such matters as these were in no way decisive in relation to the illimitable demands made on us during the war. Nor do I clearly see how a real war of defence can be staged. The cleverest management, and I am well aware that my own fell far short of that, could not have avoided doing things that might have been interpreted as the outcome of aggressive intentions, and that in our case would certainly have been so interpreted. And while anything of this sort would not only have been untrue to the facts, it might also have had fatal effects on our

own internal resolution. I looked upon it as a moral responsibility to avoid both these dangers under all conditions—the 4th of August showed eventually that my attitude was not wholly unjustified.*

The *rôle* of France in the great tragedy of 1914 was conditioned by its alliance with Russia and by the revival of the *revanche* idea under the *régime* of M. Poincaré. France had undoubtedly lost no time in promising unlimited loyalty and support to an allied Russia that had taken its stand behind Serbia immediately after the outbreak of the Serbian crisis. For as early as the 24th of July the Serbian Minister in St. Petersburg was able to proclaim triumphantly to our Ambassador that he would soon be convinced that it was not an Austro-Serbian but a European question that was on the order of the day. In this he was clearly echoing Russia, and M. Sassonow himself could hardly have used such brusque expressions about Vienna if he had had reason to fear a disavowal from Paris. No sign is to be found that France really damped down Russian excitement. The inclination originally shown by Viviani's representative to recognise the right of Austria to satisfaction from Serbia was transformed by a telegram from the Premier Viviani sent on his return journey from St. Petersburg into a decision to take sides with Serbia.

* Our attitude towards Italy will be discussed when we come to deal with the war itself.

A distinct want of good will was shown from the very beginning in the unremitting efforts of France to bring in question the genuineness of our efforts for peace, and to give rise to the suspicion that we were only using the Serbian affair as a pretext for falling upon France. M. Jules Cambon argued in all his despatches with his usual debating ability on the fallacious assumption that the fomenters of the war were to be sought in Berlin. The attempts that we made in Paris to bring about pacificatory action in St. Petersburg not only encountered a very profound distrust, but were at once reproduced in the Press in "distorted forms." Clearly the one anxiety of Paris was not to compromise itself with German diplomacy in the eyes of the Allies, not to appear to be a lukewarm ally, nor to cause disquiet in any way to its Russian partner.

The French Cabinet at the same time considered that it was its principal task to help to bring about the entry of England into the war. Both English and French documents give a lively picture of the persistence and obstinacy that M. Paul Cambon showed in his negotiations with Sir E. Grey. However much Grey in these conversations maintained the fiction that England's hands were free, M. Cambon was so little discouraged thereby that in the end he succeeded in bending the English statesman. The pact was concluded when France at last, on the 1st of August, obtained the assurance that the English fleet would

stop German vessels passing through the Channel, and would defend the French coast against German attacks. This was the moment in which England finally abandoned its neutrality and definitely bound itself. France had got what it wanted.

The French Cabinet made use of another means in its canvassing for English support that in itself is very characteristic of its whole attitude in the crisis. That was—I cannot express it otherwise—want of veracity in its representation of what was actually happening. Not only M. Viviani, but also M. Poincaré, personally and persistently maintained that Russian general mobilisation was the result of a universal Austrian mobilisation.* I have already noted and the fact is notorious that the Russian mobilisation posters had already been read by everyone in the streets of St. Petersburg early in the morning of the 31st of July, while the Austrian mobilisation was only decided on several hours later. This was, indeed, just the point though the French Cabinet raised it in this fashion; and the military attitude of Germany was dealt with by the French statesmen in as unfair a manner. I had instructed our Ambassador in Paris, Baron von Schoen, to point out to the French Government that a continuance of French military preparations would force us to take steps for our defence. We should have to proclaim a state of war menace that would not necessarily imply mobilisation, but

* Blue Book, No. 134. Yellow Book, No. 127.

must inevitably increase the tension. We still hoped, however, that peace could be preserved. M. Viviani misrepresents these instructions in his telegram of the 1st of August to M. Paul Cambon by asserting that we had notified an early proclamation of a state of war menace, and under cover of this had begun mobilisation itself.* And on the 1st of August M. Viviani expressed his surprise to Baron von Schoen with reference to his notification of the German mobilisation, because Germany was taking such a step at a moment when a friendly exchange of views was still going on between Russia, Austria and the other Powers.† M. Viviani thereby admitted that diplomacy was still at work, with good prospects, and accused Germany of having arbitrarily disturbed this good work, although he knew perfectly well that this diplomatic action was due, before all, to the efforts of Germany, and that it was Russia that had interrupted it by mobilisation. When the Tsar himself, in his telegram to the Kaiser of the 29th of July, declared that he clearly saw that the military measures that were being forced on him by his entourage must lead to war, and when Sir E. Grey on the 30th of July recognised that the suspension of the Russian military measures offered the only, if exceedingly remote, chance of maintaining peace, then it is impossible to take it for granted that M. Viviani had not realised the significance of the

* White Book, Annexe 17. Yellow Book, No. 127.
† Yellow Book, No. 125.

Russian mobilisation to which the German was merely a reply.

Finally, it is particularly to be observed that M. Viviani, on being informed by Baron von Schoen of of our ultimatum to Russia at 7 in the evening of the 31st of July, thereupon pretended that he had no knowledge of the alleged complete mobilisation by Russia. Such innocent ignorance is simply inexplicable. It is evidence of a bad case to take refuge in falsification, and there can be no doubt as to the object for which the French Cabinet adopted such tactics. It was necessary to give the impression, even by questionable means, that the Russian general mobilisation had been provoked by the Central Powers. Not only could the political manipulation of England be best forwarded thereby, but the reaction therefrom was badly required in France itself.

The French peasant and workmen did not want to go to war for Serbia, and would not waste French blood for Russian ambitions in Constantinople. Possibly thoroughgoing Chauvinists would, in July, 1914, not have shrunk from bringing war out of the blue for Alsace-Lorraine; but the French people would hardly have stood for this. However deep the idea of *revanche* was rooted, we should be wrong in believing it strong enough by itself for a war of offence. So far as I know, Paris is the one capital where, in July, 1914, there were street demonstrations against war. Wilson is to some extent right when he says in the 8th of his

14 points that Alsace-Lorraine has imperilled the peace of the world for nearly half a century. The lost provinces prevented the international atmosphere from ever clearing. They hung over it as a permanent storm cloud. But the thunderbolt itself came finally from elsewhere. It was the Russian authorities who were the passionate protagonists, the French were merely sympathetic seconds. The French people had therefore to be convinced that we were the truculent aggressors. That has reinforced the extraordinary energy with which France has fought through these cruel years of warfare.

If the war had broken out in the East, Germany would have found itself in a most awkward position in the West. We could with certainty anticipate that France would not leave its Russian ally in the lurch. When the French Cabinet, on our inquiry, made the well-known reply that France would act as its own interests required, we had no choice but to declare war on France. And thereby we made ourselves appear as the aggressor, even though we believed we could adduce evidence of previous aggressions by French troops.* I do not think that we could have avoided

* The German declaration of war referred to French frontier incidents and aeroplane attacks. Reports of these air attacks proved to be false in many of the incidents enumerated. On the other hand there can be no question that the frontier was first violated by French troops, and that they were on German soil on the 2nd of August, the day before the declaration of war.

With a view to exciting public opinion the French Foreign Minister published in 1918 an extract from our instructions of the 31st of July

being forced into this position. The rapidity of the military decisions to which we were constrained by the Russian mobilisation neither allowed us to adopt a passive strategy in respect of France, nor admitted of time for diplomatic transactions for the improvement of our political position. The aggression of Russia dictated to us our attitude as it is in the nature of an offensive to do.

* * * * * *

Our invasion of Belgium has been generally considered as of crucial importance in the course of the universal catastrophe. Here, more than anywhere else, we are bound to consider the matter objectively. This applies to both friends and foes alike.

Our military men, as far as I know, had had for long only one plan of campaign which was based on the unmistakable and unmistaken assumption that a

calling on the German Ambassador in Paris for the surrender of Toul and Verdun as security in the unlikely event of the French Government declaring neutrality. It is well known that this part of our instruction was never carried out, and consequently never came to the knowledge of the French Government at that time. The question of security, consequently, had no effect on the course of events. If France had actually given a declaration of neutrality, we should have had to expect that the French army would have completed their preparations in every detail under the protection of an apparent neutrality, so as the better to fall upon us at such time as we might be deeply involved in the East. We had to have good guarantees against this, and military authorities considered that an occupation of Toul and Verdun for the war would have sufficed. This military view had to be taken into account in instructing the Ambassador.

war for Germany must be a war on two fronts. The plan of campaign was—the most rapid offensive in the West, and, during its first period, a defensive in the East—after the anticipated successes in the West attacks on a larger scale in the East. A strategy on these lines seemed to offer the only possibility of making head against the enemy's superior strength. But military opinion held that a condition of success for the Western offensive was passage through Belgium. Herein, political and military interests came into sharp conflict. The offence against Belgium was obvious, and the general political consequences of such an offence were in no way obscure. The chief of the General Staff, General von Moltke, was not blind to this consideration, but declared that it was a case of absolute military necessity. I had to accommodate my view to his. No observer who was in any way in his sober senses could overlook the immense peril of a war on two fronts, and it would have been too heavy a burden of responsibility for a civilian authority to have thwarted a military plan that had been elaborated in every detail and declared to be essential. For this would later have been looked on as the sole cause of any catastrophe that might supervene. It would appear that military circles are to-day discussing whether a fundamentally different strategy would not have been better. I am not concerned with expressing an opinion on this point; but the experience of our Polish campaign of 1915 does not, I

consider, admit of the conception that Russia, in the summer of 1914, would have met an offensive in such a manner as would have admitted of a successful defence by us against the French offensive that must have immediately followed. In any case, such points could not have induced me, in July, 1914, to undertake the responsibility of resisting what was then presented to me as a unanimous conviction of the military authorities. The ultimatum to Belgium was consequently the political execution of a decision that was considered militarily indispensable. But I also stand by what I said on the 4th of August when I admitted our offence, and at the same time adduced our dire need as both compelling and condoning it. Nobody can deny that need who does not shut his eyes intentionally to military facts, and no one can denounce our offence on the facts as at present before us. That we could have relied upon the obsolete conventions as to the fortresses is a view that will not support examination for a moment. It would have been a diplomatic blunder that could not have survived a day. On the other hand the breaches of neutrality by Belgium had not been brought to our notice by the 4th of August. The documents in which Belgian and English military representatives negotiated in 1906 as to the military use of Belgium were only found during the war. But even supposing we had known the contents of these documents at the declaration of war, does anyone believe that on the strength of them

Belgium would have conceded passage to our troops, or, indeed, that I could have persuaded the world that we had thereafter the right to march through Belgium? Certainly these documents are compromising for Belgium, but even if they had been much more compromising than they really were, they would only have freed us from the obligation of respecting the guarantee of neutrality of 1839. We should thereafter have been quite as little justified in marching through Belgium as we were before, and if Belgium had refused our request we should then have been compelled as we subsequently were to use force, that is to make war against Belgium. But, as I have already said, this is not to the point; and further examination showed how little convincing the documents really were. We published the originals as soon as we had found them in Brussels, but I cannot say that I notice that this did any particular harm to the enemy propaganda. The immense injury that I am supposed to have done for Germany, by what I said on the 4th of August, which has anyhow never been seriously disputed, seems to me to exist only in the imagination of those who found it a useful weapon against me.

The enemy propaganda was in no way weakened, and continued to work through unlimited exaggerations, not to say falsifications. Italy and Roumania soon freed themselves from their treaty obligations under frivolous pretexts, and took the opportunity of our dire straits to make war on us; not because their existence

was threatened, but because the Entente thrust them on and they thirsted for plunder. They were received with open arms and loud applause as noble champions for right and justice. We, on the other hand, were branded as criminals because we had insisted on marching through Belgium in our struggle for life, and no attention was paid to our assurances as to the integrity of and indemnity to Belgium. One could hardly conceive a more crass inconsistency.

The moral indignation with which England went to war against a breach of treaty is hardly consonant with the facts of English history. English statesmen had entertained very different and very peculiar views as to this particular case of Belgian neutrality in the event of British interests being affected. The English public that has allowed itself to be spurred to so deep a resentment would do well to inform itself on this point.*

And this is seen to be the case in the present even more clearly than in the past. Sir E. Grey has said himself that it was not Belgian neutrality that made England enter the war. He reports his conversation

* See especially the following statements. Lord Palmerston in House of Commons, 8th of June, 1855. Gladstone *ib.*, 12th of August, 1870, especially Diplomaticus's letter in *Standard*, 4th of June, 1887. It is true that in the declarations of the 19th of January, 1917, and 16th of March, 1917, the English Government denied that this letter represented the views of the Government of Lord Salisbury then in office. All the same the documents found in the Belgian archives, unfortunately not for the moment at my disposal, give convincing proof to the contrary.

with Prince Lichnowsky on the 20th of July as follows: "After speaking to the German Ambassador this afternoon about the European situation, I said that I wished to say to him, in a quite private and friendly way, something that was on my mind. The situation was very grave. While it was restricted to the issues actually involved we had no thought of interfering in it. But, if Germany became involved in it and then France, the issue might be so great that it would involve all European interests; and I did not wish him to be misled by the friendly tone of our conversation—which I hoped would continue—into thinking that we should stand aside. . . . There would be no question of our intervening if Germany was not involved, or even if France was not involved. But we knew very well that if the issue did become such that we thought British interests required us to intervene, we must intervene at once, and the decision would have to be very rapid, just as the decisions of the other Powers had to be.*

You see, there is nothing about Belgium. But Grey says as clearly as diplomatic language allows that England's interests would require her to take part in the war as soon as France was involved. And if, in principle, he still keeps a free hand for his country with an eye to his Parliament and public opinion, practically he has obviously already made up his mind. His conversations with the French Ambassador,

* Blue Book, No. 89.

29th and 31st of July, 1914, are illuminating as to both these points.

He then said to M. Cambon:—"If Germany became involved and France became involved, we had not made up our minds what we should do; it was a case that we should have to consider. France could then have been drawn into a quarrel which was not hers, but in which, owing to her alliance, her honour and interest obliged her to engage. We were free from engagements, and we should have to decide what British interests required us to do. I thought it necessary to say that, because, as he knew, we were taking all precautions with regard to our fleet, and I was about to warn Prince Lichnowsky not to count on our standing aside, but it would not be fair that I should let M. Cambon be misled into supposing that this meant that we had decided what to do in a contingency that I still hoped might not arise."*

And further on the 31st of July:—"Up to the present moment we did not feel, and public opinion did not feel, that any treaties or obligations of this country were involved. Further developments might alter this situation and cause the Government and Parliament to take the view that intervention was justified. . . . M. Cambon repeated his question whether we would help France if Germany made an attack on her. I said that I could only adhere to the answer that as far as things had gone at present we could not take

* Blue Book, No. 87

any engagement . . . the Cabinet would certainly be summoned as soon as there was some new development, but at the present moment the only answer I could give was that we could not undertake any definite engagement."*

See also the specific declaration in the same conversation.

"The preservation of the neutrality of Belgium might be, I would not say a decisive but an important factor in determining our attitude."

Finally, Sir E. Grey's conversation with Prince Lichnowsky of the 1st of August, 1914, is highly significant. Grey reports it himself as follows:—"He asked me whether if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality we would engage to remain neutral. I replied that I could not say that; our hands were still free and we were considering what our attitude should be. All I could say was that our attitude would be determined largely by public opinion here, and that the neutrality of Belgians would appeal very strongly to public opinion here. I did not think we could give any promise of neutrality on that condition alone. The Ambassador pressed me as to whether I could not formulate conditions on which we would remain neutral. He even suggested that the integrity of France and her colonies might be guaranteed. I said that I felt obliged to refuse definitely any promise to remain neutral on similar

* Blue Book, No. 119.

terms, and I could only say that we must keep our hands free."*

It would be easy to accumulate further proofs, but only one other will be referred to here. On the 1st of August Sir E. Grey informed the French Ambassador that he would ask the Cabinet to declare that the English fleet would oppose German passage of the Channel and any demonstration against the French coast. On the morning of the 2nd of August this was officially agreed to, and therewith a state of war between England and Germany had already been created. But at that moment our ultimatum had not yet been presented to Belgium.

England did not go to war for Belgium. But because it felt itself morally bound to France, even though literally it was still free, and because it considered that British interests required that France should be protected. The impartial observer can come to no other conclusion, even if he excludes from consideration the fact that influential British circles were only too glad to take part in a war against Germany. Our violation of Belgian neutrality was a pretext for war, that only affected the decision of the English Government in that it possibly hastened it, and certainly provided a plausible appeal to the public. Sir E. Grey himself, moreover, in his great speech in the Commons on the 3rd of August, 1914, dealt with the Belgian affair merely as a part of the

* Blue Book, No. 123.

whole question. He had, at that moment, no knowledge of our ultimatum, and could therefore speak only hypothetically of the violation of Belgian neutrality. He had, however, now to communicate the correspondence exchanged in November, 1912, and took all the pains in the world to show that England had kept a free hand in spite of this correspondence. Everyone, he said, must judge according to his own feelings how far the friendship with France involved any obligations. But since the 2nd of August there was an obligation with respect to the defence of the French coast. While that was no declaration of war, yet it was binding in the case of German naval action against the coasts of France, or against French shipping. He showed from various points of view that England could not remain neutral, and concluded with the following words:—"If we did take that line (neutrality) by saying we will have nothing whatever to do with this matter—that no conditions of the Belgian treaty obligations, the possible position in the Mediterranean with damage to British interests, and what may happen to France if we fail to support France—then we should sacrifice our respect and good name and reputation before the world, and should not escape the most serious and grave economic consequences."

On the 6th of August Mr. Asquith, the practical politician, made his speech:—"If one asks what we are fighting for, I reply in two sentences. In the

first place in order to comply with the solemn international undertaking (here we have Belgian neutrality), in the second place we are fighting in defence of the principle that small nationalities shall not be struck down by the selfish will of any strong and overwhelming Power against international truth and faith." These formulæ thus fixed the two focal points round which henceforward English war propaganda religiously revolved, and established an edifice of political engineering of highly practical simplicity in which all discordant considerations of historic accuracy were quietly ignored. But the man of all others whose fiery eloquence and accurate knowledge of the English spirit made him the doughtiest defender of the English war legend, himself blurted out in an unguarded moment what was only intended for the ears of the initiated. On the 8th of August, 1918, Lloyd George said, "We had a compact with France that the United Kingdom should come to its assistance if it should be wantonly attacked." "We didn't know that," interrupted another member, Mr. Hogge. "If France should be wantonly attacked," repeated Mr. Lloyd George. Another member again called out, "That's new to us." The ex-Cabinet Minister, Mr. Herbert Samuel, at once recognised the danger of the admission, and tried to bring it into harmony with Grey's version of the correspondence of 1912. Lloyd George thereupon modified his statement :—"I think the word 'compact' was much too strong to express

what had actually taken place." He re-read Grey's letter and continued:—"I think the word 'compact' was too strong an expression in this connection. I think the expression, 'obligation of honour,' would be a more correct description of what actually took place than the word compact, and certainly there was no treaty."

No. Certainly there was not. But it was the ground for England's entry into the war.

The leaders of the Opposition who were all behind the scenes had called things by their right names on the 2nd of August, 1914. Bonar Law had then written the following letter to Mr. Asquith:—"Lord Lansdowne and I consider it our duty to let you know that according to the opinion of ourselves and of such colleagues as we have been able to consult, it would be fatal to the honour and security of the United Kingdom if we hesitated to support France and Russia in the present circumstances, and we have no hesitation in offering the Government our support in all measures they may consider requisite for this purpose."

There you have it—honour and security of the United Kingdom"—"support of France and Russia"—no word of Belgium.

The importance of these statements we have reviewed seems to me to extend far beyond a mere historic interest in the true course of events. We Germans can thereby estimate accurately the damage done to us by our invasion of Belgium. Foreign

opinion may perhaps at some future date recognise that our offence against Belgium, committed under pressure of a struggle for life against the whole world, was worked up by enemy agitation into a crime through which we forfeited our place among the nations. Whereas England, even if we had not committed this offence, would nevertheless have joined in the *grande battue* against Germany with its full strength and its whole world influence. Those of us living to-day cannot say whether the scars of hate inflicted on us by England can or will ever disappear from our country. It has been given out from English altar steps that the killing of Germans was a work pleasing to God; and our children, and children's children, will bear traces of the blockade that England enforced against us, a refinement of cruelty nothing less than diabolic. England has taken good care that its warfare shall leave after effects on our lives, even though, in course of time, the graves of millions of dead should grow green with the years that forgive and forget. But falsehood and slander must be eradicated if the hope of a subsequent reconciliation of the peoples is not ever to remain a dream.*

* Enemy propaganda has made particular capital out of the reports sent by Sir E. Goschen to his Government as to his last conversation with me on the 4th of August, 1914 (Blue Book, No. 160). The Ambassador forgets to mention in his despatch that he began the conversation with the question whether I could not give him a different answer to the English ultimatum than that of Herr von Jagow. On my refusing, the Ambassador asked whether, supposing the war were to his deep regret finally decided on, we could

On the 29th of July I had made an attempt to find out what we had to expect from England, and did so with a candour corresponding with and required by the gravity of the situation. My inquiry, which was received in England with moral indignation as a disgraceful solicitation, was in fact to the effect whether England would remain neutral in a war against us on two fronts; and my assurances for the event of its neutrality were quite adequate to remove any anxiety in England as to the alteration of the European *status quo* in the event of a German victory. The reply that I got, stripped of its moral frills, stated that England would keep itself a free hand, that is, that England would not renounce intervention in the

not have, before parting, a private and personal conversation as to the awful situation in which the world found itself. I at once agreed and asked the Ambassador to dinner. I then went on to speak in very strong terms of the world disaster that I could see would necessarily follow the entry of England into the war, and, after Sir E. Goschen had more than once brought up the question of Belgian neutrality as the deciding point, I ejaculated impatiently that, compared to the fearful fact of an Anglo-German war, the treaty of neutrality was only a scrap of paper. This expression was perhaps an indiscretion, but my blood boiled at his hypocritical harping on Belgian neutrality which was not the thing that had driven England into war, and at his complete want of perception that an English declaration of war must destroy so much that was of value in the world that a violation of Belgian neutrality was of comparatively little weight. It seems to me an unusual diplomatic proceeding to exploit a private conversation officially. But, in doing it, Sir E. Goschen might at least have been thorough, and, since my emotion struck him so much, he might have reported that in taking leave of me he burst into tears and begged me to allow him to wait a little in my ante-room because he did not feel himself fit to appear before the clerks in the Chancery.

war. On this occasion I could not help getting the impression that now, as both before and after, English statesmen could only look at the world war through the spectacle of British interests, and had closed their eyes to the results on the world and on humanity that must follow from a war between the two cousins on opposite sides of the North Sea. I was under no illusion as to the prospects of this attempt. English publicists* have descanted, not without irony, at the miscalculation we made in counting on English neutrality. But they forgot how thoroughly we had been brought to understand the English tendency through Edward VII., the Mansion House speech, and through the Haldane Mission. And they also overlook the fact that we had received definite information about the Anglo-Russian negotiations in the spring. Anyone in England who erroneously ascribes to us so fundamental a blunder at least contributes to destroying the Belgian neutrality myth. With us, too, a well-known political group has given currency to the theory that I had shut my eyes to the English danger and counted on the friendly attitude of England up to the last moment. This is one of those misrepresentations that are common in political controversy, even when they run counter to facts. It was just my attempts at an understanding with England, that I began with my entry into office and continued regardless of failure, that showed that I realised the English peril

* *E.g.*, F. S. Oliver, *Ordeal by Battle*, p. 58.

at least as well as those whose noisy naval policy was only aggravating the evil. A man who has had the peril of his country so near at heart as I should not have halters woven for him from the threads to which he has clung in his desperate efforts for safety.

At last on the 1st of August, there seemed to be a ray of hope. The well-known Lichnowsky telegrams arrived in which Grey personally, and through his private secretary, again reopened the question of the neutrality of France in a Russo-German war, and that of England in a war of France and Russia against Germany. The Kaiser, on receiving this news, and in the presence of his military and political advisers, at once decided that the disadvantage of delaying military preparations must, without question, be faced in spite of the fact that the intelligence was not improbably erroneous. Our Ambassador received immediate instructions from me to grasp the hand which seemed to be stretched out to us. If England would guarantee the neutrality of France we would undertake no military action against France. The Kaiser telegraphed in the same sense to King George. But it was a mirage that at once melted away, an unexplained misunderstanding. The avalanche could no longer be avoided. The avalanche that has destroyed the Europe of our day.

VII

CONCLUSION.

FATE decided against us. But, though our enemies may feel themselves victors, that does not give them the right to judge the world. Their indictment is mere *ex-parte* statement, and the evidence that they bring is in no way proportionate to the hatred and vain glory in which they have enveloped their accusations. The proud English motto, "My country, right or wrong," is buried under business advertisements, the battle cry that makes its appeal alike, whether in victory or defeat, has been drowned in the businesslike propaganda that has proclaimed the crime of Germany while passing over in silence other facts that are notorious. Our opponents appear only as accusers; they will not accept the part of the judge who examines the accusation. The one possible tribunal that is conceivable in the circumstances (supposing that a verdict could be given as in an ordinary litigation), that is a neutral court, is unwelcome to them. And all that can be said on the German side is similarly only all *ex-parte* and consequently patchwork. It can be nothing more than a reproduction of subjective conceptions, which are themselves not free from traces such as the enormity of the catas-

trophe cannot fail to produce upon anyone with human feelings. Only historians in a remote future will be able to judge altogether *sine ira et studio.* All the same, the connection between certain facts can no longer be disputed.

The supposition that Germany let loose war out of mere lust of world power is so silly that a historian would only take it seriously in the entire absence of any other explanations at all. It is, on the other hand, a historic fact that German policy did not use many opportunities of making war with comparatively good prospects of success, but at all times sought for and supported a friendly settlement. Whereas the assumption that we should have selected the very worst possible conditions for an attempt to establish German world dominion in the most crude contradiction to all military and political possibilities, conditioned as they were by the prevailing systems of coalitions—such an assumption ascribes to us the sort of folly that is only attributed to an opponent in the heat of political controversy, and that is in no way likely to be accepted by the judgment of history. But, as a contrast to this, Russia's urgency for the domination of the approaches to the Mediterranean, and its precipitancy for the hegemony of the Slav world, are historical factors of indisputable force. Pan-Slav tendencies permeate all Russian policy with a strength that varies but never vanishes altogether. The determination of Russia to get possession of the

Straits at the cost of a European war can be documentarily proved. And if Russia forced the Pan-Slavist issue that had been rendered acute by the outrage at Serajevo from a local to an international question and thereafter carried it by application of its whole armed strength from a diplomatic to a military question, we cannot avoid seeing that this Russian action is nothing but the logical expression of a line of historical development that Russian policy has identified with its national mission, and that is, moreover, entirely unmistakable in its immediate effect.

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian federation that was a necessary part of the realisation of the Russian plans was of fundamental import to the European political system. The future of Germany was bound up in the fate of the Monarchy of the Danube and this brought the whole *status quo* of Europe in question. But this purely European dispute was only given force enough to cause World revolution through England taking part on the side of Russia. The settlement of the Straits question and of the Slav question was a matter of absolute indifference to Australia and Canada, to India and South Africa. Indeed the English dominions and colonies were concerned only, apart from colonial loot, in seeing that the British empire of the world was not weakened by the struggle. And the same interest may well have determined the attitude of America. Even during their early neutrality the United States were, in fact, most

effective auxiliaries of the Entente; and whatever views may be taken in international law of the American supplies of arms and munitions, their immense, possibly decisive, significance to the fighting forces of our enemy is unquestionable. The attitude of America cannot only be explained by the financial control of the Trusts and by a general indifference to Germany, that was converted gradually by English propaganda and by the *Lusitania* into detestation. In spite of the imperialist rivalry that was already declaring itself between the two Anglo-Saxon Powers, the United States felt itself more closely related to the British world empire than to the growing German power. There was only Japan that had still, to some extent, not been completely drawn into the English group. The Kingdom of the Rising Sun, as soon as it had safely pocketed its pick of the German colonies, started playing the part of the *tertius gaudens*, well pleased at the marked weakening of the combatants. Under pressure from England the war became a campaign of destruction of almost the entire world against Germany. England provided the programme of the knock-out, which was later to be the kicking of an opponent who was down. English foreign policy that first made war possible by unchaining the bellicose inclinations of the Dual Alliance with assurances of British support, and English procedure in the war itself, are the true causes of the world revolution that is now proceeding.

Thus we find the Anglo-German conflict to be the ultimate origin of the war. This fact is confirmed by the elemental explosion of popular passion in both countries. This in Germany assumed rather a form of indignant anger, while in England it was not without a spirit of destroying hate. This explosion may perhaps be explained by a subconsciousness in the two peoples that a world disaster might have been avoided if they could have got on better together. The view that England of *malice prepense* sought for a trial by battle with its German rival is, in my opinion, as wide of the mark as the English ideas of the same nature about us. The real explanation probably is that statesmanship in these two countries was either too weak or else unwilling to save the world by a doughty deed from a fate that was already hanging over it like a threatening storm. And if I am confident that I did my best towards effectively conjuring this danger, I am in no way blinded by self-conceit to the inadequacy of my efforts. Nor do I find any excuse for my failure in the fact that a policy of reconciliation was offensive to those Germans who considered themselves as the appointed guardians of the national idea; while those who really agreed with me either could not or would not give me such support as could have carried the matter against popular feeling. An action capable of cutting the knot could only have been achieved if the leaders of English political life could have made up their mind

to break definitely with that principle of alliances that had stereotyped instead of sterilising the evil.

World power implies world responsibility. The assimilation of the interests of humanity with those of the British Empire, which is peculiar to English thinkers is, of course, unacceptable to Germans. We can never admit that a spirit of humanity could have inspired a policy which did not hesitate in the interests of British supremacy to reduce by starvation a whole nation of seventy millions to misery for a whole generation, or could have inspired a policy that curtly refused to put a stop by a peace of reconciliation to the massacre of mankind to which it had summoned the sons of every quarter of the globe, and that only because thirst for power was not yet slaked in the ruin of their opponent. The assertion that England had done all this solely for protection of the lesser nations, or had acted as an instrument in divine chastisement of an enemy of mankind, is as absurd as it is arrogant. Such an assertion is as obviously at variance with the way England conducted the war as with the way it concluded it, and it need not be seriously discussed. But the nakedness of a brutal selfishness that has perhaps imposed itself for long as a curse on the life of the nations is not to be covered by a transparent veil of sanctimoniousness.

If English statesmanship occupied itself entirely with the pursuit of its own power through alliances and armaments, it was only following the general

drift of the day. Europe went down to disaster owing to the delusion that political responsibilities towards humanity could be discharged by so drifting and a culpability that is common to all nations is centred in this fatal fallacy. And this culpability includes those who would gladly have averted the war. For it is just as ridiculous to acquit any particular Power of all complicity in this world catastrophe as to arraign one Power as being entirely culpable. Nowhere had political wisdom been able to convey any conviction that the course taken by general conditions in the world compelled all countries to revise their attitude towards war. The Great Powers of Europe only thought of the augmentation of their own power without ever reflecting that the existing Power Groups caused every alteration in the relations of the Great Powers to affect profoundly the entire world. While the very prevalent idea that war is not only the proper expression of national forces but is even a moral purge for a people ran riot unchecked. Nor was it considered that the recruiting of entire peoples and the unholy discoveries of science had converted a chivalrous trial by strength into a delirious massacre, destructive of every moral sense. The Cabinets were very far from having any sense of collective responsibility for mankind. Even if, in course of time, spiritual power should get control of material force, even so force will still remain the symbol of national life; and it will be as little within

the power of communities as of individuals to curb completely the primæval forces of selfishness. But we may see the final cause of the fate that has fallen upon the world in the failure of the nations so far to make any serious attempt to revive an international life and the folly with which they have hurried in an exactly opposite direction.

The controversy as to which party gave the first impulse to a programme of general armament and to a perversion of the policy of alliances will probably never be fought to a finish. Immeasurable mutual distrust, imperialistic ideals, and a patriotism restricted to material national instincts, respectively worked each other up without its ever being possible to say that any particular nation had contributed most to the general tendency of the world. All the same, it may be observed that if we consider the extremes on either side, Chauvinists in France and Russia demanded the conquest of Germany and in England desired to cripple it, therein openly advocating aggressive intentions; while the exponents of the same point of view in Pan-German circles, in spite of their undoubted and damaging extravagances, scarcely anticipated or aspired to anything more than the repulse of hostile ambitions by a strengthening of Germany. The contrast was also obvious between the official patronage of Chauvinism in France and Russia and the Pan-German opposition to the German Government. It was, however, a natural consequence of

Great Britain's dominion of the world that developments came to a crisis as soon as England took part in them. In spite of their millions of armed men, the Triple and Dual Alliances by counterbalancing each other brought about no breach so long as England remained in the background and maintained the balance. For the Triple Alliance was purely defensive, and the offensive ideas underlying the Dual Alliance would not risk action without the certainty of English support. The " splendid isolation " of England was a great guarantee to the peace of the world. The further England departed from this position the closer had Germany to associate itself with Austria-Hungary, and it is more than a coincidence that the great Army Bills of 1913 date back to the interference of England in the Franco-German dispute about Morocco. Finally, when England had so deeply involved itself in the system of alliances that military support of its Franco-Russian friends had become a point of honour, the military policy of the Dual Alliance passed in its turn from a period of passivity into one of practical activity. From defenders of peace these alliances had grown to be designers of war. That is the net result of European statesmanship.

And now the Entente has achieved the goal of its ambitions. It commands an undisputed and undivided control over the world, and can realise without criticism those ideals of Right and Justice, of Liberty and Humanity, that have been its battle cry. If the only practical result achieved yet by the Paris

peacemakers has been the gratification of greed for conquest, the coercion of Germany, the construction of numerous new polities that give small guarantee of any permanent peace and the creation of a League for the permanent subjection of Germany. If the Golden Age, with a newer and worthier Germany, that the Entente had promised to conjure up as soon as Prussian militarism was defeated, appears as yet only as a reign of robbery, roguery and revenge; and if the permanent peace aimed at by President Wilson has been mutilated out of all recognition by allies who owed their victory to him, must we ascribe this to the belief of the European Powers that they can lay the basis of a reconciliation of the peoples by means of territorial mutilation and economic emasculation? If they think so they will learn before long that they are wrong. A humanity horror-stricken by this war will require not only more respect for the public, but more respect for the peoples. It will not allow itself to be tied and bound for long by the chains of a statesmanship that tethers it helplessly in its old beaten track, and that, so far from restraining it from injury by war, only reopens the old wounds that cause it.

The Entente greatly over-estimates its strength if it thinks it can create a new age by brutalising Germany and Balkanising Central Europe. Europe must either heal its self-inflicted wounds by its own free and friendly self-help, or it will bleed to death. And if realisation of the implacable realities that compass us about rejects all arguments based on

moral values as unbusinesslike and bloodless, yet our own history gives us Germans hope in the invincibility of a creative activity contributing beneficially both to a community and to humanity as a whole. If we can revert to such an activity as this, no peace conditions can prevent us from contributing to the creation of a better future.

We shall only be deceiving ourselves if we think that the new constitution with which Germany enters on the darkest chapter of its history can in any way guarantee our future, still less if we imagine that vilifying our own past can do so. The Paris negotiations, in which republican or at least democratic Governments were concerned, show that such forms matter little. And we merely weaken our self-respect, and thereby our self-reliance, if we vulgarise the spirit of self-sacrifice that upheld us during the war into a noisy self-satisfaction fed on lies, or if, thirsting for truth, and under stress of misfortune, we indulge in self-condemnations as injurious as the summary sentences passed on us by the enemy. Lamenting over what is lost only lessens our powers of helping the nation in its need, and even those who failed in warding off misfortune may hold firmly to the belief that the spirit that inspired our people to heroic endurance can never die, but will bring us again out of the inner and outer darkness to the light of day.

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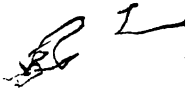

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